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**BY HENRY CURLING, ESQ.**

**IN THREE VOLUMES.**

**VOL. I.**

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**For the pieces of Poetry in the pages of this  
story I am indebted to my esteemed friend  
EDWARD WALLACE, Esq., H.C.S.**



## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE following story records the life of a man who, because he met with frequent misfortunes, believed himself to be languishing under the ban of fate,—a notion consonant to a popular fallacy. A more dangerous delusion, however, cannot be entertained. It is one that deadens our endeavours ; precludes a scrutiny into the character of those means which, as they often miscarry, ought at least to be suspected ; hinders us from adopting new schemes of life, and new modes of action ; and tempts us to lay on *chance* the blame more justly attributable to ourselves.

The hero of this tale then shows the folly and madness of unbridled passion and reckless impulse, which never fail to produce

disastrous results. His sophistical reasoning is, in fact, only the blind solace of self-love—of that unhappy flattery and egotism which veil from us one of the most important truths, namely, that—“ CONDUCT IS FATE.”

LONDON, NOVEMBER, 1843.



# THE SOLDIER OF FORTUNE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

“With all my heart,” cried the host, who, going to his own chamber, brought out an old portmanteau secured with a chain, which being opened, the priest found in it three large volumes, and some manuscripts written in a very fair character.

DON QUIXOTE.

It was about the autumn of the year —, when two gentlemen of the military profession were seated in a dilapidated room of a miserable pot-house, the only place of entertainment in a small savage looking village situated amongst the bogs and mountains of the west of Ireland.

Although the sign pertaining to this ill-favoured hostel, creaking and swinging in the

furious blast, promised, on its weather-beaten face, good cheer within both for man and beast, yet, to judge from the lenten entertainment furnished forth, mine host's larder seemed as ill stocked with savoury viands as his apartment was destitute of comfort and accommodation. His guests seemed, indeed, "promise crammed;" a dish of Irish fruit, and two black bottles, one containing full-proof whisky and the other a candle's end, being all the provision set before them.

The gorgeous and elegant apparel and accoutrements of the inmates of this ill-appointed apartment were as much at variance with their present quarters, as the service they were upon was displeasing to their taste and feelings.

They were, indeed, two officers of Hussars, upon a tithing expedition, and detached in this miserable hamlet during the prevalence of heavy rain, riot and cholera morbus. Having finished their day's work and collected together, after toiling from dawn till near nightfall, a large assortment of measly pigs, one horned beast, a glandered mare, and a brace of pothery sheep, they were endeavouring to regale themselves upon such scanty fare as at the moment

came to hand, whilst their soldier-serving man caught, plucked and dressed the tough old dunghill cock, whose shrill voice had "done salutation to the morn," any time for the last quarter of a century in the adjoining stable-yard.

The time was something "out of joint." Discord there was and disease in this fair island; a pestilential vapour seemed to hang in the very air, whilst Pat, raging against authority and advice, opposed himself to all belief in the existence of the epidemic, threatened the doctor with death, and taking to the mountains vowed to bring fire and sword upon the devoted heads of all, whom a sense of duty obliged (under every adverse circumstance) to remain and tender assistance to the sick and dying.

Those villages, indeed, which were in turn visited by this dreadful scourge, were nearly depopulated before the inhabitants would consent to abandon their favourite pastime of waking and howling over the dead. Eleven doctors successively draughted from Dublin had fallen victims, in one town alone, to Pat's dirty habits, obstinacy and unbelief, and, even in the small place we have been speaking of, the assistance of additional troops was required in order to

force the inhabitants into measures for their own safety and protection.

On the present occasion, the village of Bally-oflaherty was in a state of siege ; large bodies of ruffians, amounting to thousands, were collected in the fastnesses around ; bonfires were to be seen upon the hills, and Muddymoat Hall the seat of a nobleman, in the immediate neighbourhood, was threatened with destruction.

Food, in the mean time, was scarcely to be procured by the officers on this detachment. Every house in the village was infected, and its neighbourhood held in such evil repute, that although the infuriated assemblage threatened it with fire and sword, they were apparently afraid to begin the onslaught, in fear of the deadly plague which hung over the atmosphere of its vicinity.

The very inn in which Captain Sabretash and Cornet Snaffle had quartered themselves, on being called into this ill-reputed place, was "in trouble ;" mine host had that morning died of the disease, several of his family had during the day been seized with the disorder, and even the farm servants and labourers of the establish-

ment\* had deserted their several duties, and fled panic-struck from the wrath to come. Meanwhile, a rabble-rout of Ribbonmen and ruffians who still remained, rushed continually through the depopulated streets, keeping the police and military constantly on the alert, lest by setting fire to the infected houses they should burn the place down altogether.

Whilst the two officers we have named were sipping their whisky toddy, and listening to the dreary whisper of the sweeping blast, varied as it was by the wailing cry of the wakers of the dead in the hovels around, the interruption of an infantry brass drum, rattling and rolling in the distance, announced the approach of a party of foot, which the exigence of the times had obliged the authorities to add to the force already stationed in Ballyoflaherty. The fresh detachment presently halting before the door of the hostel, a couple of officers of Highlanders were added to the party within.

All soldiers are or should be comrades, even

\* Those peasants who had taken to the mountains, during the prevalence of the disease, would rather go forty miles round, than venture to pass through a village, whilst the panic lasted.

though enemies, says Byron ; and the new comers, after having quartered their men in a ruinous old market house which stood immediately opposite the inn, were quickly made welcome to such fare as the miserable place could afford.

“Gentlemen,” said Captain Sabretash, rising from the three-legged stool, on which he had been seated before a glorious turf fire ; “I make you welcome to the Shin of Beef and Gridiron. For mine own part, I would to Heaven my boots had been filled with boiling water, ’ere I pulled them on, in order to visit this adverse town ; we’re scoured to death here with continual motion. Patrick (like Jack Cade) has been up these three days, and albeit we have found plenty of work on hand, we have but scant of food to offer you by way of refreshment. However, there’s whisky galore till supper makes its appearance, and my friend Snaffle always travels with his holsters well filled with cigars ; so draw your seats to the fire, dry your clothes, and make yourselves merry in the peat reek.”

Lieutenant Plume and Ensign Phillibeg, upon this invitation, seated themselves, filled their

tumblers, lit up their cigars, and enveloped by the vapour which arose from their saturated habiliments, like the steam of a seething cauldron, proceeded to enjoy themselves as well as circumstances would permit.

Your soldier is indeed seldom a hard man to please ; he makes himself at home in whatever situation the service places him, and the hasty meal snatched in the bivouac is often remembered with more pleasure than

“The feast prepared with riotous expense,  
Much cost, more care, and most magnificence.”

As the conversation, which took place between the four officers thus assembled in the little parlour of the Shin of Beef and Gridiron, is material to the story which we are about to present to our readers, it shall be given pretty nearly as it took place.

“My service to you, Mr. Plume,” said Sabretash, lifting his glass to his lips, “fill your chalice, man, and light up your Havannah. It strikes me we have met before. I remember the —th Highlanders being quartered at the Castle at Edinbro’, whilst we were lying at pleasure at Piershill.”

“Exactly so,” returned Plume; “we *were* in the north together. I do indeed recollect the —th Hussars being at Piershill Barracks; by the same token, you may remember we had an exchange from yours to ours, just before you came north. You will scarce have forgotten poor Blount of the —th.”

Captain Sabretash, who was about to carry his tumbler to his lips, with a sort of start, set it untasted upon the table before him. “By the Lord,” said he, “you are right; Blount did, indeed, leave our regiment for the depôt of the —th Highlanders. Pray tell me, if you know, what became of that fine fellow? I’d give more than I’ll say, or you believe, Lieutenant Plume, if you could give me tidings or information concerning him. Snaffle,” he continued, addressing himself to his subaltern, “you remember Ratcliffe Blount, the haughty, gallant, Blount, that creature of romance?”

“What, I!” said the Cornet, who was in a most pleasing and dreamy state of intoxication, the effect of full proof whisky after fatigue and upon an empty stomach; “Strike me stupid if I can recollect, at this moment, any such person; he might have been familiar with the ancients;



but there was no such name in the Hussars in my time."

"Tush, man," returned Sabretash, "you *must* remember Ratcliffe Blount; a man so invariably unlucky, that it appeared as if he could scarce move two steps to the front without fracturing a leg or an arm in the effort."

"Ha!" said the Cornet, rousing himself and lighting a fresh cigar; "there was an unfortunate, I now remember, of that name, who was ex-coriated of fur, lace and feather for life; and broke by sentence of court-martial, I think, whilst in *your* corps, Captain Plume."

"He was," returned Plume, "and I fear he was somewhat unjustly treated whilst with us. He was an extraordinary fellow, that Blount, possessing the most brilliant talents, many virtues, and one fault."

"Oh!" said the Cornet, "I dare say, like tar water, possessing every virtue under heaven, only nobody patronizes it; strike me comical! He was my eternal aversion, that Blount, between you and me, Captain Plume, but let it go no further."

"Perhaps so," returned Plume; "he was not a general favourite amongst men: his temper

was violent as I said, and he could not control it."

"And that one error filled him with faults," struck in the Cornet. "Said I well? Go to, Sabretash, I remember your man now, he was one of those step sons of fortune, whom, as Sir Walter has it, she treats with unceasing rigour, and ends with disinheriting altogether. Ergo, he's either married or buried, I'll wager the price of my commission."

"Come, Snaffle," said Captain Sabretash, "don't be ill-natured. Blount was no favourite of yours, I know, because he generally superseded you amongst the fair sex."

"Strike me ugly!" returned the Cornet, taking out his pocket glass, and adjusting his moustache, "if ever I remember *that* fact. Rat the fellow! I know he was an ass, and wished to engross all the Violantes in the kingdom; but that he ever succeeded in cutting *me* out, *Spadaccino*! I think you will find it difficult to prove *that*, Captain Sabretash."

"Do you speak," said Ensign Phillibeg, "of Ratcliffe Blount, formerly of the Grange, somewhere in the neighbourhood of Wharncliffe,

in Yorkshire; Blount the duellist, as he was called?"

"The same," replied Plume.

"I also knew the man," rejoined Phillibeg, "he was a sort of modern Quixote; his life was one tissue of extravagance, error, and misfortune, all the consequence of the one fault you have named. He was a dangerous fellow, I've heard; peppery as a West Indian plantation, and ever thrusting the quarrel upon his most intimate friends. He was in the regiment before my time; but the misfortune which occurred to us in Scotland is known to every man in the army. There were many things said against that man."

"Name one of them," said Sabretash.

"Strike me dumb, if I couldn't enumerate fifty," interrupted the Cornet.

"Let Ensign Phillibeg be heard on this subject, Cornet, my dear!" said Sabretash; "I ask him for one single circumstance, in his experience, that can tell against my unfortunate friend Blount."

"Let me see," said Phillibeg, musing; "what was his history?"

"A blank, my Lord," said the Cornet; "Shakspeare—ahem!"

"I cannot, at this moment, particularise any

thing against him," said Phillibeg, hesitating and trying to remember; "but I recollect there *was* something, which caused him to be but slightly regarded amongst us; and although I cannot exactly blame him on account of the transaction which deprived him of his commission in the —th, yet I remember, with the majority of mankind, he was no favourite. He was however a fine honourable fellow; and, in truth, I believe ill luck was his main fault."

"He was not only," said the Cornet, "unlucky himself, but the cause of ill luck in others; stap my vitals!"

"Exactly so," returned Sabretash, "the beginning, middle, and end of that man's story (as far as I know it) was one continued series of misfortunes. Had he remained with us, he must I think have risen; for like Rupert he was *toujours soldat*, chivalrous as Falconbridge, and jealous in honour as the Spaniard."

"Ay,—'and sudden and quick in quarrel as the fiery Tybalt,'" said the Cornet.

"He was in the service a trifle too late," continued Sabretash, "had he served during the war he must have risen to distinction; as it is, I fear me he has fallen—"

“‘Like Lucifer, never to rise again’,” struck in the Cornet.

“I trust not, Snaffle,” returned Sabretash. “When last I saw him, ’tis true he was reduced in circumstances, his patrimony was in the hands of strangers, and himself an outcast in the open world. He was then in Spain, serving with the Anglo-Spanish Legion, and ready ‘to set his life on any cast, to mend it, or be rid on’t.’ I was lucky enough to be of service to him in that country, and we returned to England together. In short, he gave me the history of his life to read, a singular tale, and not altogether unedifying, as far as I have perused it. I have never seen nor heard of him since ; but I have the manuscript with me in my portmanteau, gentlemen, and as we shall in all probability be detained in this deadly-lively village for some days, suppose we beguile the tedium of our evenings by reading a few pages of Blount’s history.”

The party agreeing to the Captain’s proposal, he produced his manuscript. Cornet Snaffle was appointed reader to the party, and during the intervals of duty, whilst quartered in Bally-oflaherty, they amused themselves by listening to the following narrative.

## CHAPTER II.

A heavier task could not have been imposed,  
Than I to speak my griefs unspeakable ;  
Yet that the world may witness that my end  
Was wrought by nature, not by vile offence,  
I'll utter what my sorrow gives me leave.

SHAKSPERE.

I AM a native (the narrative began) of that pleasant county of England, called Yorkshire ; and my parents are descended from one of the most ancient families in that part of our island. I was born heir to a considerable estate, and the only child of my parents. My mother died when I was about ten years of age ; she was considered extremely beautiful, and my father doted on her to excess, consequently, after her death, he refused all consolation, and withdrew himself almost entirely from society. He was a good, a

talented and brave, but rather violent tempered man. Indeed, without partiality, I may say he was superior to the usual order of country gentlemen.

In early youth he had served for many years in the army; but, after marrying, he quitted the profession of arms, in order to live in ease and retirement amongst his native woods and fields.

My early education was at a school in the neighbouring town, and I also made some further progress at home under a private tutor. Having thus a great deal of my own way allowed me, my father pretty generally preferring to live secluded and alone, I saw little of society in my nonage. The few folks who used to come to our house were, for the most part, some of his old army friends, and one or two very intimate acquaintances whom he much esteemed, and especially liked. Naturally of a reserved disposition, he would even in his "dawning time of day," scarcely give up his leisure to the miserable waste of time incident to the modern style of keeping up a host of visiting friends, and having all his spare hours devoted to giving and receiving invitations to

dull dinners and country balls. He, however, was passionately fond of the chase, kept a good stable, and I always had my choice amongst his stud.

Occasionally he used to accompany me in my excursions; but at other times I was left to pursue my own erratic disposition, and as he frequently took periodical fits of seclusion, during which he liked none (not even myself) to trespass upon his solitude, I was then left entirely to my own control and guidance, and being of a roving disposition, wandered over the country, wherever chance or my steed might lead me. Being thus left pretty much to myself in my peregrinations, I became of a thoughtful and romantic disposition, frequently spending whole days in the solitude of the forest, or in loitering about the ruins of an old castle which was situate in our domain, and had been the residence of our crusading ancestors; trying in such vicinity to fancy myself some doughty champion, or knight errant of the olden time.

Thus then the most lonely haunts, and the most picturesque ruins were often sought out with feelings of perfect delight. Had I lived some centuries back, I should doubtless have



been the veriest, "redresser of grievances" in all Christendom; as, however, I could not be a knight cased in panoply of steel, with "helmet all barred," I resolved to become a man at arms of the time being, and accordingly solicited my sire's leave to enter a regiment of Dragoons. No opposition being made to my wishes, a letter was forthwith dispatched to the Commander-in-Chief, recommending me for the purchase of a cornetcy of horse.

I now considered myself, in reality, of some consequence in the world, and in anticipation a regular man at arms. The ringing out of the trumpet, the boom of the kettle-drum, and all the pride and circumstance of a regiment of Dragoons were ever present in my imagination.

In due course, an official letter was received from the Commander-in-Chief, saying that my application would be granted on the first favourable opportunity; which, serving for the present to tranquillize my mind, I somewhat prematurely visited, and in a measure took leave of, all my old haunts and favourite resorts. The mossy, and gnarled oak, beneath whose shade I had oft-times spent whole days, I prepared to part from, as from a dear and

beloved friend ; indeed, I almost loved some of the old trees, situate as they were in the most lonely and deeply wooded parts of our domain, as if they had been my relatives. The ruined archway too, and the ivy clad wall, I loved as intensely ; whilst the mouldering towers, which, in former times, had owned my ancestors as Lords, had witnessed all their feudal pride, and seen them depart for the crusade, seemed ever to look down upon me with protecting influence. I loved, too, each remaining iron stanchion of those ruined windows, which had so long survived the captives they once enthralled, and every stone of the building was an old and cherished acquaintance. Indeed, I wept sometimes at the idea of parting from these, the almost only intimate friends of my youth ; and at such times well nigh resolved to give up my military mania, content to live and die, as my father so often urged me, a quiet respectable country squire.

Such, however, was not to be my career, and I felt that such existence would be almost a living death to me. In short, as I before hinted, my brain being quixotically constructed, I was as violently carried away by the idea of the

stirring adventures, the new scenes, fresh quarters, and the uncommon exploits incident to enrolment amongst a squadron of Hussars, as the Knight of La Mancha was confounded by his perusal of the chivalrous feats of Amadis de Gaul and Don Bellianis of Greece.

It chanced, that having one day set out on a fishing excursion, mounted on a spirited hunter, and carrying my rod athwart my saddle bow, in making a short cut through some plantations, I saw, at a little distance before me, in a glade of the wood, a fierce struggle between two men; one of them I perceived was on horseback, endeavouring to defend himself against his more powerful adversary who, having captured his bridle, rained a shower of blows upon his body, in order to bring him to the ground.

The efforts of the horseman to defend himself, I perceived at a glance, were growing every instant more feeble, and although he managed to parry some of the ruffianly blows of his assailant, and clung tenaciously to his saddle, it was evident the strife was drawing towards a conclusion.

As I gazed with surprise upon this scene, I quickened my pace towards the combatants, and

observing that the equestrian was evidently an elderly gentleman, and his assailant, a common looking ruffian, I considered it a regular case of 'stand and deliver.' As in duty bound, clapping spurs to my steed, and galloping to the rescue, I charged the combatants with such impetuosity that I completely overacted my part, and driving them "horse and foot" to the earth, with the violence of the shock, came myself also to the ground, some few paces from them.

Like a champion in the lists, I had so often read of, I leaped to my feet in an instant, and disengaging myself from my fallen steed, sought to repair my fortune and renew the onset. My blood was up; like Juan, "though young, I was a tartar," and making for the assailant of the horseman, I resolved to arrest him on the spot.

He also had gained his feet, and was quickly hurrying from the field; but I rushed upon him, intercepted and forced him to turn and defend his person. Our combat was short and decisive; evading the heavy blow, with which he sought to tame my vehement attack, I struck him so quickly and truly upon the head, that with the iron spear affixed to the end of my fishing rod, I fractured his skull. The fellow

staggering a few paces fell heavily upon the green sward ; his limbs quivered for a moment ; and his eyes, after glaring wildly at the heavens for an instant, closed in death.

At first, I could scarcely credit what I had so valorously achieved, and stood at guard, supposing my antagonist would presently recover, and perhaps attempt a renewal of the contest.

As I continued, however, to gaze upon his blood stained visage, on which death had now set his mark, I began to feel a sort of tremor stealing over me at, for the first time in my life, beholding a dead body at my feet, not to mention that the unhandsome corpse I saw before me was one of my own killing.

The lonely spot in which this encounter had taken place also had its effect upon my nerves ; and gladly turning from the contemplation of the body of the slain, I looked round for his former antagonist.

He, too, I perceived, was still upon the ground, and apparently unable to rise.

Supposing that he had been stunned by the violence of the overthrow, I hastened to his assistance, and endeavoured to raise him in my

arms. To my extreme terror, however, I found that he also, to all appearance, was a corpse.

Again laying him gently on the ground, I felt for the beating of his heart, tried to find his pulse, and even in the extremity of my consternation and alarm shook him violently, as if to awaken him from a deep sleep.

T'was, however, all in vain. To my horror and dismay, all my efforts at restoring him to life were unavailing. He had evidently received so sudden and violent a fall, that being an elderly man it had instantly deprived him of life.

For the first few minutes I felt quite bewildered with this most untoward event, and as I continued gazing upon the pallid visage before me, I suddenly remembered the features as those of the proprietor of the adjacent domain to which the plantation belonged.

Sir Walter Villeroy had been personally a stranger to me, and even my permission to angle in the rivulet which meandered through his park, had recently been obtained through the intervention of our keepers.

Here then was a dilemma of a most unpleasant nature ; as although I had acted with the best intentions, I had evidently brought about the very catastrophe I was seeking to prevent.

It will readily be imagined that I felt considerable horror at this double slaughter ; the very sun which gilded the foliage around me and tinged the fern at my feet with his rays, seemed to shine unnaturally upon the bodies of the dead. Whilst the free birds, twittering and chirping on the adjacent boughs, appeared to mock me in their joyous mood.

With stealthy and dismayed glance, I looked around in the hope of some living persons making their appearance in the wood, in order to relieve the deadly solitude in which I was the only remaining actor.

I felt, indeed, as if I had committed a murder, for although I had attempted the rescue of a gentleman from the savage attack of a common cut-throat, yet, as I neither knew the exact provocation of the assault, nor whether it was upon the purse or life of the defender that the ruffian was making this attempt, I felt that I ought to have given my assistance with somewhat more

discretion and less impetuosity. As these thoughts flashed through my brain, I withdrew a short distance from the vicinity of the bodies, which thus annoyed my sight, and with some difficulty succeeded in catching my horse. Leaping into the saddle, I felt myself somewhat reassured, and resolved to ride off instantly to Marstone Hall, and inform the inmates of the situation of its owner. Putting spurs, therefore, to my steed, I turned my back upon the lists in which I had thus made my first essay in arms, and almost flew till I found myself in the darksome shade of the old avenue leading to the Hall, and then I drew bridle, to consider in what way I was to introduce so untoward a subject, and account for the catastrophe.

I knew nothing of the family, as they generally resided either in London, or at a seat they possessed in Gloucestershire; neither did I even know if there was wife or child of the man I had killed, to whom I was to give the necessary intelligence. Whilst I thus slackened my pace, under the shade of melancholy boughs, and approached nearer to the Hall, I suddenly came to the determination



of concealing my own share in the unlucky part of this transaction. It was the resolve of the moment, and I stopped not to consider its propriety ; but I felt that I was quite unable to tell the story, and name myself as the cause (even although the almost innocent cause) of the old gentleman's death.

## CHAPTER III.

O when mine eyes did see Olivia first,  
Methought she purg'd the air of pestilence.  
That instant was I turned into a hart,  
And my desires, like fell and cruel hounds,  
E'er since pursued me.

SHAKSPERE.

MARSTON Hall, the residence of Sir Walter Villeroy, was a noble pile. It had been built in the reign of bluff King Harry the Eighth. I have already said, I knew nothing of the present occupiers, except by name, they having but lately thought fit to remove to our neighbourhood; but oftentimes in my wanderings, I had loved to explore the precincts of a building so time-honoured and curious in architecture. I was now about to introduce myself to its inhabitants, though the unpleasant mission I found myself necessitated to undertake robbed

me of any sort of curiosity, or anticipated pleasure in my visit.

The stately trees of the avenue I stood in, as I dismounted in order to approach the main entrance, rendered the spot dark as twilight, and the rooks, wheeling over the topmost boughs of the stately oaks, alone disturbed the deep solitude, by their incessant cawing.

As the gates were open, I entered the fore-court, which seemed deserted and melancholy. I called aloud for some one to take my horse, but no David Gellatly came capering and singing wild snatches of antique ballads, in answer to the summons. I tied my steed to one of the iron rails of the great gates which opened into the stately looking fore-court, passed the murmuring fountain which played in its centre, ascended the flight of stone steps, and entered the hall of the mansion.

As no one yet appeared, I paused to observe the splendour of the place I had intruded into. Several suits of polished armour hung around, together with the trophies of the chase ; pikes and guns, and bows of the olden time, also graced its walls ; and the proud banners of

ancestral chivalry floated from either side of its carved and gilded roof.

At any other time, the objects of interest I now beheld would have fully occupied my attention ; at the present moment I felt anxious, without disturbing the family, to discover the servants of the establishment, and dispatch them to the assistance of the sometime owner of the grandeur I saw around me.

Whilst I deliberated upon the propriety of venturing further into the interior of the mansion, or of returning to seek for some of the outdoor dependants, a light step approached, the door at the further end of the apartment opened, and a female entered, the sight of whom by no means lessened the difficulties of my situation, for she was apparently under twenty years of age, and lovely as the goddess of spring.

At first, supposing it was her father who had returned home, she came bounding towards me ; but, the next moment, discovering her mistake, she stopped abruptly, and, looking like some inhabitant of the skies, who had suddenly alighted upon the marble floor of the hall she stood in, awaited, in

some little surprise, the explanation of my intrusion.

To give that explanation, and escape an abrupt and premature disclosure of the catastrophe which had happened, required more tact, self-possession, and management than an unsophisticated and secluded rustic like myself was likely to possess. "The might, the majesty of loveliness," for the first minute, struck me dumb; the awkwardness of my situation completely perplexed me, and after muttering some incoherent excuses, so much of my secret escaped, that Miss Villeroy, guessing either that her father was killed, or had at least met with some dreadful accident, uttered a piercing cry and fell senseless upon the floor. I had not even sufficient alacrity to prevent the severity of her fall.

I now awoke the echoes of the mansion with my cries for assistance, and, lifting Miss Villeroy from the ground, gazed upon her chiselled features, with the wonder of a savage who sees beauty for the first time.

In a few minutes, I was surrounded by the liveried attendants of the hall, and informing them of the catastrophe which had happened,

dispatched them in search of their unfortunate master, and to procure medical assistance. The alarm now quickly spreading through the mansion, its quiet was soon changed into female lamentations and outcries.

Meanwhile I placed my lovely burthen upon an outer bench on one side of the ample fireplace, and, with the assistance of her maids, tried, by every possible means I could think of, to restore her to consciousness. Her long dark hair almost covering her face nearly hid her features, as she reclined partially supported in my arms. I shaded back these tresses, sprinkled water in her face, and forgot her father and the recent drama I had helped to enact, as I continued to gaze upon her beauty. Methought I could have spent an existence in kneeling beside and admiring her. Like Juliet's, her beauty seemed—

Too rich for use, for earth too dear.

Perhaps from having seen little of society, the impression made upon me, by the sight and contemplation of so fair a creature, might have been the more forcible.

At length, by the aid of such restoratives

as were at hand, we succeeded in recovering Miss Villeroy from her death-like swoon, although only to behold her again relapse into unconsciousness, at the dreadful sight of her father's body, which was borne into the hall by the servants I had despatched in its search.

Luckily, the medical man from the adjacent village quickly arrived. He was a shrewd and clever person, one of those eagle-eyed men, who oftentimes at a single glance perceive that which would take a duller practitioner half an hour to consider. He soon found his art was of no avail, where he had first given his attendance, and stepping from the circle of domestics, who crowded around Sir Walter Villeroy's prostrate body, he approached, with lancet in hand, the seat on which I still continued to support my fair charge.

"I'll relieve you of your patient, fair Sir," he said, "this is a sad business; Sir Walter Villeroy has received a concussion of the brain, and ruptured one of the main arteries. He has been dead sometime; I may perhaps be of more use here."

He accordingly immediately ordered the young lady to be conveyed to her chamber, and

attended her removal himself. Meanwhile, after the domestics had carried the body of their late master to his apartment, I became, as harbinger of the unwelcome tidings, the next object of curiosity and cross examination. The corpse of the ruffian had been found on the spot where I had slain him. In telling the story as it had happened, I concealed, however, so much of the share which I had in the old gentleman's death, as my impetuous zeal had helped to anticipate. Indeed, I considered that the crime, by this means, would only be visited upon the memory of the ruffian whom I had already placed beyond the vengeance of the law, and who, I certainly had reason to believe, would have quickly effected his purpose, had I not made my appearance upon the scene. I therefore resolved to have it supposed that he was the actual perpetrator of the murder. Like Sir Edward Mortimer, I rounded my tale with a lie—

Guilt's offspring and its guard.

From Dr. Probe I learned that Miss Villeroy was an only child, and heiress of all her father's immense wealth; that they were



unaccompanied at that time by any other members of their family, and were just on the eve of leaving England on a continental tour. He also informed me, that the ruffian who had assailed the Baronet was well known as one of the most abandoned characters in the county,—

A fellow by the hand of nature marked,  
Quoted and signed to do a deed of shame ;

and that Sir Walter had but lately prosecuted him, for frequent tresspass upon his preserves.

From these circumstances, my version of the story was the more easily believed, and glad enough I felt that it was so, for to have been recognised by Miss Villeroy as the cause, although the innocent cause of her only parent's death, would, I felt, have led her to regard me with feelings of dislike and horror.

Dr. Probe, who was well acquainted with the family, and had been much esteemed by Sir Walter Villeroy, was a shrewd and clever man. He took upon himself whatever arrangements were requisite and necessary, on this sudden emergency, until the relatives and friends should arrive. He wrote and despatched

letters to the Earl of Marston, brother of the deceased, during the intervals of his attendance upon his lovely patient. He also despatched an express to an elderly lady residing some thirty miles distant, also a relative of the family's, desiring her immediate presence at the hall, where he himself prepared to remain in constant attendance, until she arrived.

I myself would fain have taken my leave, as the evening approached, but he requested me to remain, and as I felt no inclination, in reality, to leave a roof now so interesting to me, I remained there all night; and, during the intervals of his attendance upon his patient, assisted him in the office he had assumed of writing letters to the various members of the family. Her grace the Duchess of Hurricane, I was informed, was the aunt of Miss Villeroy, she was abroad at this time, and to her amongst others we despatched a letter, apprizing her of the calamitous event.

## CHAPTER IV.

Sir, you have wrestled well, and overthrown  
More than your enemies.

AS YOU LIKE IT.

It was, indeed, with feelings of no small uneasiness, that I found Dr. Probe entertained considerable apprehension in regard to his young patient. Early in the morning, he had despatched an express to the nearest town for a physician of some eminence residing there, she having been delirious during the greater part of the night, and violent fever having supervened in the morning.

Although I felt the greatest anxiety on her account, and longed to stay at Marston Hall, yet, being so utterly a stranger there, after lingering on till towards the evening of this day, I then mounted my horse to return home, a changed man and a sadder than I had sallied

from it in the morning previous. As I leisurely paced along, I revolved in my mind the various incidents that had transpired. The reflection that, for the first time, I had deviated from the truth, weighed heavily upon me, and I could not shake it off my conscience; it seemed to press upon my heart, and to bode me evil fortune in my future career.

Our residence was called Wharncliffe Grange, it was a castellated and half monastic building, nearly hidden in the midst of luxuriant and venerable trees, surrounded by a deep moat, and approached by an ancient drawbridge. The dark waters surrounding the old building lay tranquil and sombre, as I approached; and, reflecting the lowering heavens in the twilight black as ink, were only agitated, now and again, by the heavy splash of some enormous fish, which had tenanted their depths, during perhaps many generations of our family. Methought, as I paused upon the drawbridge, and contemplated my home, looking into this dark pool, whilst the night bird shrieked in the woods around, that some water spirit, some evil genius of my fortunes, might be, perhaps, plotting the mischief and misfortune of my

future destiny. In fact, I was somewhat troubled on that evening with "thick coming fancies," and presentiments of evil, a sort of feeling which had never before so wholly beset me.

The clatter of my horse's hoofs across the wooden bridge summoning my groom, I resigned my steed, and entered the mansion of my fathers. An ancient dame, who for years had lived in our family as a sort of housekeeper, and always took the most maternal interest in all my actions, intercepted me as I was about to ascend to my chamber, in order to have her accustomed gossip, and inform me of all that had happened during my absence. It was my intention, after altering my dress, to have sought and conferred with my father. To my surprise, however, Mrs. Sweetapple informed me, that having been visited on the previous evening by a stranger, who had arrived from the neighbouring town, in a post chaise, and who she believed was a lawyer, my father, after some hours' conference with him, had ordered his carriage early the next morning, and both had then started off for the great metropolis.

“ He has left a letter for you,” continued the old dame, “ in his study, which he desired you should receive, as soon as you arrived.”

I proceeded to the library without delay, and shutting myself up, perused the contents of this epistle. I learned from it, that my father unexpectedly found himself involved in a chancery suit, and having been visited by his solicitor, he had thought fit (such was the urgency of the matter) instantly to leave his home for London. He added that he should have preferred my accompanying him, had I been at hand at the moment, and if I chose to do so, I might still follow. But he left me to pursue the bent of my own inclination in the matter, giving me the address of the hotel where he intended to remain whilst in town. I certainly did not at that moment feel any inclination to be in London, as I was now too much interested in the neighbourhood I was in, and therefore resolved to remain in its vicinity. Indeed, I could not have gone at that time, had I wished it, as I expected to be summoned on the inquest, which would doubtless be held upon the bodies found in the plantation.

After the inquiry was over, I made frequent visits to Marston Hall. Indeed, I spent more time in its vicinity than at my own home. Like Roland, I “loved to breathe the neighbouring air,” and the sight even of the massive Elizabethian chimneys, seen from afar, was pleasant to me to contemplate; then as the gloom of the coming night enveloped the surrounding scenery, and “the crow wing’d to the rooky wood,” I would spur apace, and reach my home. Meanwhile, Miss Villeroy, after having been in considerable danger, was gradually recovering.

It was a few days after the funeral of Sir Walter Villeroy had taken place, that having as usual ridden over to Marston, I received a message from the servant requesting me to alight; Mrs. Allworthy, the lady before mentioned, as residing in the neighbourhood, having arrived and being desirous of seeing me. I accordingly dismounted from my steed, and entering the hall, was ushered into the withdrawing-room, a vast apartment, extending nearly from end to end of the building. Whilst I stood at the window, waiting the coming of this lady, and contemplating the beauty of the scene

before me, I beheld a travelling carriage, with four horses, sweep round the road, at some distance in the park, and approach the mansion at full speed. As it advanced, a second vehicle laden with an imperial and other appointments also made its appearance.

I immediately surmised that these arrivals must be the distinguished relatives of Miss Villeroy, whom we had summoned from abroad, on the late melancholy occasion, and a shy and uncomfortable feeling unconsciously stole over me, as I watched their approach. I felt there was something irksome and disagreeable in having to introduce myself to strangers, and once or twice I almost resolved to escape before they arrived.

Recollecting, however, that Mrs. Allworthy, who was, I concluded, in the chamber of the invalid, would be likely to make her appearance before they came, which would in some measure relieve me from the awkwardness of my situation, I resolved to remain, and in a few minutes more the door of the apartment was thrown open by the servant, and in walked the portly person of the 'Duchess of Hurricane. A younger female accompanied her, who was



extremely handsome and *distinguée* in appearance.

They advanced into the room with all that presence and dignity belonging to persons in their rank of life, and the Duchess quickly observing me, as I stood before the open window, immediately approached, slightly bowing as she did so. Being rather short-sighted, she at first took me for Dr. Probe, with whom she was slightly acquainted. On seeing, however, her error, she stopped short. The high bred, I have observed, are always courteous, even when distant in their manners. The Duchess of Hurricane, however, was one of those persons who could freeze a forward tongue into silence, by a glance. Not even the glorious Siddons, in Lady Macbeth, could be more awful when she chose. She looked her surprise for the moment, at seeing a strange youth instead of the medical attendant, whom she expected to find in the apartment; and after a short pause addressed me:

“I am extremely happy to hear my niece is so much recovered,” she said. “Can you inform me if Dr. Probe is in the house; as, if

unattended with danger, I should like to see Miss Villeroy immediately."

I ventured to observe that, to the best of my belief, the doctor was at that moment in the chamber of the invalid.

The Duchess again bowed, drew herself up, and turned to address her young companion.

"So," she said, stepping to one of the ample windows, "this then is Marston Hall? What think you, Constance? rather a handsome mansion! I feel surprised, now I see it, that my brother did not oftener reside here."

"I call it a most lovely spot, mamma," returned Constance; "one of the most delightful places I ever beheld. Look at those glorious old oaks in the distance yonder; one would think that, as Scott says, they must have witnessed the stately march of the Roman soldiery."

Nay," said the Duchess, with a yawn, "if you begin again with your romance, I have done. Ring the bell, Constance, and let us summon the medical man; the people here seem all bewildered with this late untoward event."

During the short pause which now ensued

I felt extremely uncomfortable. The haughty bearing of the Duchess forbade all further attempts, on my part, at conversation, and I found myself as confused and awkward as Marlow, during his first interview with Miss Hardcastle.

At length, to my relief, Mrs. Allworthy made her appearance. After the first greetings and inquiries were over, she introduced me to the Duchess and her daughter, the Lady Constance De Clifford; and the trio soon afterwards leaving the room for the apartment of the invalid, I gladly prepared to take my departure.

As I passed through the great hall, I encountered the persons who had arrived in the second carriage; the Earl of Marston and his son, Lord Hardenbrass of the hussars. Having travelled from Venice, where Dr. Probe's letters had reached them, with the news of the late melancholy event, they were making inquiry of Haverill, the butler of the hall, into the particulars of Sir Walter Villeroy's death. I heard Haverill mention my name to them as I passed out; but feeling no desire at that time to make the acquaintance of any of the

other members of the family, I mounted my horse and rode homewards to the Grange.

It was about a week after this meeting, that a servant entering the library at the Grange, as I was one morning engaged in writing to my father, delivered a couple of cards announcing that two gentlemen were on horseback at the gate, and had desired the favour of an interview.

“As I know’d the Squire doant love strangers,” said the old domestic, “I said I’d take up this ticket, before I let um know whether you wur at whoam or not.”

“You did right, Ripsley,” said I, glancing at the cards, which were those of Lord Marston and his son. “Admit the gentlemen, instantly ;” and my visitors were accordingly ushered into my presence.

The Earl of Marston was a fine specimen of the English noble of the old school. His manners were those of the polished gentleman. Perhaps he was rather too dignified ; but yet so graceful in his deportment, that you invariably forgot his high rank in admiration of his pleasing address.

His son, although like his father, “a good

man's picture," was in style and bearing imperious and haughty. He evidently could not forget his Norman shield. His arrogant style, indeed, belied not his disposition, since he was a kind of modern Tybalt, and being of an overbearing fiery temper, and querulous withal as the weasel, was ready almost to fight with his own shadow. It was unlucky that a youth of this sort was destined to cross my path in life, as the association could not possibly lead to good. The old Earl seemed even himself to lie in awe of his son's irritable temper. He sought to take the lead in the conversation, during this visit, and by his professions of service, to do away with the contemptuous and rude manners of his companion.

"I have great pleasure, Mr. Blount," he commenced, "in making the acquaintance of the son of an old friend. Your father, I had the pleasure of knowing in America, whilst he commanded the —th dragoons. We served together during a campaign there, and a better soldier, or more estimable man never existed. Indeed, it has been my especial loss, that for many years we have not met. Per-

mit me to introduce my son, Lord Hardenbrass."

Lord Hardenbrass made a sort of motion, which he perhaps intended for a bow, stared impudently in my face, but uttered no word of greeting.

"We have called to return you thanks, Mr. Blount," continued the Earl, taking the seat I offered him, "for your display of gallantry, on the late melancholy occasion. Your kindness also to Miss Villeroy, and the attention you have offered since that unhappy affair, merit our warmest acknowledgments. We are also the bearers of a message from the Duchess of Hurricane who, I believe, has already had the pleasure of making your acquaintance. She desires me to say, that although, at present she of course receives few visitors at Marston Hall, she will feel obliged by your favouring her with a call, at your earliest convenience."

During this visit, two things more especially annoyed me: the one was, that I was necessitated to recapitulate, even to its minutest particular, the late untoward rencontre; the other was the very marked and contemptuous bearing of my younger visitor. Sprung from ancestry,

time honoured as his own, I could ill brook the hauteur with which he bore himself, and in any other circumstances, I should doubtless have returned the scorn it was his pleasure to treat me with. At the present time, however, I felt rebuked in mine own esteem; the sort of lie I had been obliged to round my story with, in regard to the death of his relative, kept me in some measure within bounds, and I felt humbled; added to which the strong love I bore his cousin made a tame snake of me.

As it was, however, that “cankered hate,” which is oftentimes felt by two persons towards each other, at first sight; that “pernicious rage” which, like the animosity of Montague and Capulet, was only to be quenched “with purple fountains issuing from our veins,” was first engendered during this visit; and notwithstanding the conciliatory address, and pleasing manners of the old Earl, and my own caution in regard to taking offence from his son, we parted on terms so distant, that I felt I had almost commenced a quarrel with a member of the family with which I most wished to be on terms of friendship.

On preparing to finish his visit, which the Earl had prolonged as much as possible, notwithstanding the cold and repelling nature of my reception, he condescended to inform me of the arrangements of himself and sister, in regard to their fair charge, Miss Villeroy. His own engagements, and the opening of parliament, he said, obliged him almost immediately to return to town. His sister the Duchess, on the contrary, proposed, after remaining some little time with the invalid, to persuade her to leave a neighbourhood, now so fraught with mournful recollections, and accompany her to the Duke's seat in Scotland.

My Lord Hardenbrass, I perceived, on Miss Villeroy's name being mentioned, watched me with a jealous eye, and I therefore scarce remarked upon what I so much wished to learn.

"When in London, Mr. Blount," continued the Earl, rising to take leave, "I am to be found in Grosvenor Square, where I shall hope for the pleasure of seeing you. I shall, in the mean time, take an early opportunity of renewing my acquaintance



with my old friend, your father, on my return."

Thus saying, the two noblemen took their leave of the Grange, leaving me greatly pleased with the manners and conversation of the old Earl, considerably displeased with the hauteur of his son, and much annoyed at my own want of suavity and tact during their visit.

## CHAPTER V.

- There is a tide in the affairs of men,  
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune,  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
Is bound in shallows and in miseries :  
On such full sea are we now afloat ;  
• And we must take the current when it serves,  
Or lose our ventures.

SHAKESPEARE.

IN a few days, I visited the Duchess as she had desired. I was received by her with great civility, and she made her acknowledgments to me for the services I had rendered. The fair Constance, her daughter, who was, indeed, a lovely creature, treated me with marked kindness, and had I not before seen her cousin, I should, doubtless, have been captivated by the sweetness of her manners and her beauty. The arrogance of the Duchess she endeavoured to make up for by her own

affability, and my vanity prompted me in thinking, that she wished me to renew my visit at the Hall, and continue on terms of intimacy there whilst they remained in Yorkshire.

During one or two visits subsequently made, I saw only the Lady Constance, the Duchess not making her appearance; and we quickly grew more intimately acquainted. On calling one morning, I found this young lady about to walk in the pleasure grounds of the hall, whither she invited me to accompany her. Indeed, I had every reason to feel highly complimented by the marked kindness with which she invariably treated me.

The pleasure grounds and gardens of Marston were quite in the old style, and in keeping with the antiquity of the mansion. Nothing, even without doors, had been modernised; a specimen of good taste, not often to be observed in these latter times. The extensive gardens resembled a scene in one of Watteau's pictures, where we see the dramatic personæ, with their carpets spread under the shade of melancholy boughs, the guitar tinkling, the flask passing merrily round, and

the song, the jest, and the roar of mirth, filling the circumambient air, whilst here and again, half hidden in the leafy screen of some verdant alley, is to be partially seen a gentle swain whispering the lady of his heart, and apparently, by her glance of love, not whispering in vain.

Here then, in such lovely retreat, I accompanied the beautiful Lady Constance De Clifford. We appeared to have become as intimately acquainted, as if we had been friends from childhood. Constance was a great lover of the old poets, whose beauties afforded us an endless theme of conversation. Had I but returned the feelings of interest she regarded me with at this time, and sought her love, I should, perhaps, have met a better fate than I have since experienced. But, insensible of her excellence and beauty, I treated her marked preference with neglect.

“Come,” said Constance, looking round, as I stood regarding the distant mansion, and trying to identify the particular window which belonged to the chamber of the invalid; “one would suppose you an admirer of Miss Villeroy, you seem so wrapt and lost in contemplation

of her lattice. We shall have you, guitar in hand, serenading there, I suppose, ere long.

To beauty shy, by lattice high  
Sings high-born Cavalier.

But beware of that, Sir Cavalier; my cousin who, you may have heard, hath store of rose nobles in her coffers, will live to be as old as Sybilla, unless she be obtained by the manner of her father's will, like Portia—

Nothing undervalued  
To Cato's daughter, Brutus Portia.

Doubtless the four winds would have blown in from every coast renowned suitors; and, indeed, I might go on with the lines, and tell you that many Jasons have come in quest of one so fair, but that she has been for some time engaged to a gentleman, whom I believe you have once met, Lord Marston's son, and he is not a man to endure a rival; he is the very "butcher of a silk button." We shall have swords out, and tilting at each other's breasts in fine style, if you but look upon his lady bright with an eye of admiration."

“ Indeed !” I exclaimed, stopping short, “ Lord Hardenbrass then is the lover of Miss Villeroy ; and is he, think you, beloved again ?”

With all my endeavour at carelessness in the question, I could hardly conceal my interest. Lady Constance paused and looked at me,

“ That’s an odd question,” she said, “ but I will answer it as bluntly. I do not think that Isabella cares much for Lord Hardenbrass ; his manners are haughty and overbearing, and he is too much wrapped up in his own self-conceit to take the trouble of trying to gain her affections. However, all that such a man can trouble himself to do, I think he has done by way of winning so great a prize ; and should she ask him to give up his engagements at Melton, for her sake, I think verily he would do so. But then as she never has asked him to so far forego his amusements for her gratification, he hath never been put to the proof. They have been engaged, I think, ever since she left school, so that he has never found it necessary to play the devoted slave and servant in his wooing, feeling, as he does, so very secure of her fair self and broad lands, without the effort. He must, I

think, love her, for who could be intimate with one so excellent, and not be in love? Besides he is jealous, even if a beau but dance with her at a county-ball, and if a cavalier walk even by her side, he falls straight a capering; nay, he cannot even endure that she should be known and visited by anything clad in doublet and hose, under fourscore and odd years of age. All these signs are, I think, circumstantial evidence, considering his disposition, that the sweet youth is in love."

"But how," I observed, "did she become thus engaged, since, I think, you have satisfactorily proved that she cares nothing for him, whatever he may for her."

"Why," she returned, "it was her father's wish; he had so entirely set his mind upon this match, and she so doated on her parent, that had he urged her to engage herself to Mephistophiles, she would scarce, I think, have said him nay; and young as she was, when the engagement was made, she cared little about the matter. The Baronet, I have heard, has left it in his will, that unless she marries Lord Hardenbrass, the greater part of his immense property will go to a nephew now in India. His will, indeed, directly expresses the

wish that, by her becoming Lady Hardenbrass, and joining in wedlock, the adjoining estates in Gloucestershire should, also, be made one. Fathers have flinty hearts, Mr. Blount, in these matter o' money jointures. She will, therefore, in all probability, be one day Countess of Marston. But I know not," she observed stopping suddenly, "why I am thus telling you all our family affairs; you who are so very lately known to us. Nay, indeed, except to myself, I can hardly say you are known at all; for by those members of our family, to whom you have been thus introduced by adverse circumstances, you are not liked; that is to say," she continued, seeing me stop abruptly and in displeasure; "you are not, I think, properly appreciated. For my own part, I consider myself a more penetrating person than many of our house, and able to pierce the windows of the human breast, somewhat quicker than either my mother, the Duchess, who oftentimes takes most unconquerable aversions at sight, or any of the rest of the family. They are, I should say, impenetrable themselves, rather than the penetrators of the hearts of others."

In this lively strain, the Lady Constance



continued the conversation, whilst we strolled about the gardens of the hall.

“I am, as you may perceive,” she said, “a sort of Diana Vernon in manners, and utter whatever I think at the moment, without dread of being considered, by such freedom, bold or unlady like.”

From the gardens, we walked into the shrubberies of the hall, which extended for many miles around the domain, and it was somewhat late when we returned from our ramble. My companion was rather alarmed, with all her boasted heedlessness of control, when she found how much old Time had been a winner during our promenade, and that she would be most likely questioned by the Duchess.

During this day's promenade, I discovered, from the conversation of my lively companion, that by her family, although so little known, I was not much liked, but merely tolerated from the supposed service I had rendered. Uncertain fancy! the bare supposition galled me. On the heart of Lady de Clifford, however, the overweening vanity of youth led me to think I had already made some slight impression.

Had it so happened that at this period I had received my commission, I should perhaps have escaped ever again renewing my acquaintance with the inmates of Marston Hall, and thereby avoided much unhappiness. Indeed, after this conversation with Lady de Clifford, I half resolved to leave my home and join my father in London; but such resolve required more firmness of purpose than a youth of my years was likely to possess, and eventually gave place to the desire of again being in the company, if but for once more, of Miss Villeroy. Added, also, to that fatal longing, was the circumstance of my father having constituted me, in his absence, the manager of those affairs which required the personal eye of a master in superintending, and which, indeed, made it a matter of absolute duty for me to remain at the Grange. I, therefore, did remain, and became more and more entangled in the meshes of a hopeless passion for the mistress of Marston Hall.

Meanwhile, Miss Villeroy had been repeatedly urged by the Duchess to accompany her to Scotland; but as she raised many objections to the journey, and begged to remain in soli-

tude, till she had a little recovered her spirits, after some considerable controversy on the Duchess's part, it was settled that Mrs. Allworthy should remain with her, together with Lady de Clifford, whilst the Duchess herself visited the north. These matters I learned afterwards, for it was some little time, owing to several short journeys I found myself obliged to take on business, before I was again a visitor of my new friends.

When I next was ushered into the drawing-room of the hall, I found myself, for the second time, in the company of the beautiful creature, who, from the first glance, had made so deep an impression on my imagination. At first I thought she looked uneasy in my presence, my name being evidently associated in her mind with the horrible catastrophe of which I had been the harbinger. This, however, wore off, and she became less reserved in manner, whilst I staid. Mrs. Allworthy was present during my visit, and Lady de Clifford, fully accoutered in riding gear, was about to proceed to the little post town some five miles distant on a trifling commission for her friend. When, therefore, her horse was announced, I offered to be her escort.

Mounted upon the beautiful animal she rode, Constance appeared to the greatest advantage; she was a perfect horsewoman, and as bold as her spirited steed. Behold me then brought out under these pleasant auspices; from a secluded youth, who since childhood, had been kept from mixing with his equals, and who had, therefore, lived in a world of his own creation, I at once became the intimate companion of some such creations as I had been wont to imagine in my Shaksperian dreams. Had I, indeed, suddenly found myself transported into Arden, consorting the witty Rosalind, or contemplating the beauty of the radiant Olivia, I could not have been more happily situated, or have found two beings so nearly approaching to those fair creations of the poet's brain.

The fair Constance putting her steed into a gallop, I rode like a true esquire ever at her bridle rein. She pushed her horse over rough and smooth in wild career, so that I was obliged frequently to dash my spurs into the side of my own steed, in order to keep my place. In this part of Yorkshire, the scenery is wild, but very beautiful; that pleasant and lively watering place, Harrowgate is not far distant. Sometimes we galloped across

a bleak looking and extensive common, and then again we drew bridle and breathed our horses, where the sandy road was on either side shaded with the fragrant pine.

The seats of the gentry are situated about this part in pretty close vicinity, and the Lady Constance now and then paused to gaze upon some noble building in the distance embosomed in tufted trees ; she appeared surprised at my not being on terms of intimacy with the owners, so that I was necessitated to make her somewhat acquainted with my former life. She was grieved at finding how much I had been left to myself.

“ The Grange,” she said, “ I have heard of, as one of the most venerable and curious places in the country, and your family one of the most ancient. Methinks,” she continued, “ it is somewhat ill-judged in your father not to mix more amongst his neighbours, if only for his son’s sake. I should like much to take your old moated residence by storm some day.”

Whilst we thus rode together, and I listened to the lively conversation of my companion, and gazed on her animated and glowing countenance, with her beautiful tresses streaming

in the wind, I felt that it was even possible to be in love with two beings, although so different, at the same time. Indeed, there was something so spirited and noble, and yet so gentle in the bearing of this young lady, and the pride of conscious virtue made her apparently so perfectly independent of control, that it was impossible to be long in her society and not her admirer.

As we galloped across one of those open wastes or commons I have mentioned, a horseman suddenly appeared from the pine shadowed road towards which we were crossing, and the quick eye of the lady descried her relative, Lord Hardenbrass. He came forward at the gallop, and pulled up when he reached us. Shaking his cousin by the hand, he bowed slightly to me; indeed, the very sight of me seemed to "puddle his clear spirit."

"You seem to have ridden hard, Constance," he said, "and you have I see mounted Cottager to-day. I thought Isabella allowed no person to ride my present but herself."

"Then you thought wrong, Sir knight," she returned, laughing, "as, alas the day, you so often manage to do. But we have not had

the honour of your society, my Lord, for some time, may I ask where you have been sojourning of late?"

"I have been staying at Riverdale for the last week," he answered, "and I this morning started early to gallop over and see Isabella; I return again to-morrow for a few days, and then, my leave being up, I rejoin my regiment at Nottingham. In return for all this," he continued, turning his horse and riding close beside Lady de Clifford, "may I beg the favour of a few words with you?"

"Sir, a whole history," replied the lively Constance, "though I utterly detest all cross examination," she added, stopping her horse, "and I know well by the look of your countenance that you are about to be inquisitive."

"I must speak with you alone, Constance," he said, taking her horse's rein in his hand, and leading her forwards.

As they proceeded slowly on, I reined up my horse in order to be out of hearing of their conference. Lord Hardenbrass, it was easy for me to perceive, was by no means pleased at finding me the escort of his cousin, and his communication, whatever it might be, I felt pretty sure had reference to myself. It

apparently, however, made little or no impression on my lovely friend, and as their vehement debate drew near its conclusion, I could not help observing the scorn which looked beautiful in the contempt and anger of her lip.

“ You have spoken your speech,” I could hear her say, “ and heard my reply. Farewell, my Lord, I stay no further question.”

She glanced round to me as she said this, and I was quickly at her side; shaking then the reins of her steed, we left his Lordship, apparently, in a most unpleasant state of ill-temper and annoyance. I did not, indeed, myself feel in the most amiable disposition after this meeting. The interruption of one disagreeable and ill-conditioned guest will oftentimes mar the feast, or spoil a whole party's pleasure. As it was, this second interview with Lord Hardenbrass served to augment the fixed hate we had both, at first sight, taken to each other. As for Lady de Clifford, although she had carried it with a high hand in his presence, she evidently feared her fiery relative, and during the remainder of our ride she never once alluded to this meeting with him, nor even mentioned his name.



## CHAPTER VI.

Matter deep and dangerous ;  
As full of peril, and advent'rous spirit,  
As to o'er-walk a current, roaring loud,  
On the unsteadfast footing of a spear.

SHAKSPERE.

WHEN we reached the little village of Monks-path, I found that my companion's horse had cast a shoe. We, therefore, dismounted, and resigning the steeds to the groom, desired him to seek for a farrier and have him shod.

"You will find us," said Lady de Clifford to the servant, "either at the mercer's shop in the village, or beside the old ruin on the Harrowgate road. I know you are fond of antiquities, and a lover of the picturesque, Mr. Blount," she said to me, "so we may just as well stroll onwards, after I have made

my purchases, as remain in this somewhat dirty little town."

The hamlet had once evidently been tributary to the frowning castle she had alluded to, and together we strolled through its straggling street. When Constance had made her purchases at the shop she had mentioned, we clambered over the ruinous wall of the park in which the fortress was situated, crossed over what had once been the bed of the castle lake, now, alas, but a rushy swamp, and made our way towards the old building.

Lady Constance regained her high spirits, which had been somewhat dashed by our previous rencontre, and her laugh of perfect enjoyment once more returned, as I assisted her over the rolling stones and rough ground we traversed; which assistance, owing to her long riding habit, she was glad to avail herself of occasionally. I felt, indeed, as if in the company of a dearly loved sister; nay, perhaps, I felt even more than that, for I, at this time, hardly knew the feelings of my own heart. I was greatly fascinated with so exquisite a creature, and yet devotedly in love with another. As Orlando says, I had even before

me, "a Rosalind of a better leer, than her;" and yet I felt that I could have willingly died to have saved her from harm.

I question if a finer creature than Lady Constance de Clifford, after her own style of beauty, lived. Her faultless form was shewn to the greatest advantage in the habit she wore, and with the glow of perfect health in her damask cheek, it would be difficult to picture a more dangerous companion for an unsophisticated youth like myself. When also it is remembered, what a lovely spot we were sauntering in; the park-like forest scene, with its hundreds of stunted oaks, and the frowning castle near at hand, and withal, that my companion was high born, being the daughter of a noble Duke, and that this park and these domains, together with the worm eaten hold of ragged stone we were approaching, had once been part of the feudal possessions of her ancestors, and that their Norman shield was to be found, carved in at least a hundred places upon its walls and chambers; that she was fair as the most lovely of her line, and highly endowed; and that she took care to let me see the good figure of a companion,

whose quarterings were as time honoured as those of her own family, and whose lively conversation, was not altogether lost upon her, it will be wondered that I could possibly help becoming distractedly in love with her, and her alone;—but it was not so. The very consciousness of her regarding me with interest and favour, kept down my growing admiration for this superior being, which has oftentimes since surprised me. For the very recollection of her, in after times, has made me love her far more than when I was her intimate friend and companion. Such, alas, is the state of man, to one thing constant never; an after-life of continual meditations, tears and sorrows, might oftentimes be spent in considering the wilful mistakes and head-strong misconduct, during our progress from eighteen to five and twenty.

Often have I passed whole hours, when, in poverty and distress, unfriended, and almost alone on the surface of the globe, I have stood a lonely sentinel in a foreign land, like some hired cut throat in a bad cause. Yes, often by the loop-holed and grated walls of a Spanish convent, a solitary sentinel, I have almost

neglected to challenge the rounds during the watches of the night, whilst thinking over each expression and beautiful action of Constance de Clifford, in those brief but happy hours.

We continued to amuse ourselves in examining the old tower, and imagining it in its palmy days, now picturing to ourselves the scenes of splendour and gaiety which had there been oftentimes enacted, and then again the bustle of the feudal Baron's every day existence. We fancied how those walls were once manned and garrisoned—the stables filled with steeds and their attendants, whilst the halls and chambers, “braying with minstrelsy,” looked a sea of waving plumes. We imagined the strict watch and ward, when contention and civil butchery had broken loose in the land; saw those iron men at arms and knights of old paraded in battle array, together with the pride and circumstance of their chivalrous bearing, and the gallant appointments and appearance of each horse and armour that fled past.

The Lady Constance, like myself, loved to emancipate herself from this “workaday world,” when interested in such themes, and to be car-

ried backward into the abyss of time, to the days of the crusades, in which, indeed, she ought to have lived ; for so chivalrous a creature would have made a mailed host invincible by her presence and influence. She seated herself on a green mound of the shattered ruin, and under the shade of the ivy, which covered and almost held together the flanking towers of the building, we talked of the good old times, till we could almost have wept over the degenerate age of mediocrity in which we were living actors.

“ You live too late, Lady de Clifford,” I exclaimed, as I reclined on the slope of the hillock she was sitting upon, and gazed upon her flashing eye ; “ you ought to have lived in the times you describe so well ; in the days of Acre and Ascalon ; the days of tilt and tourney. Your very look is that of some inhabitant of such a castle as the one before us, for whose smile whole squadrons of mail-clad knights would have encountered the shock of the listed field : nay, where almost a single arm, so influenced, would sometimes turn the tide.”

“ Good Heavens,” she returned, laughing,

"what a peerless heroine I must be! Do I, in truth, look so ferocious and so old in style? Then, let me see, how I am to return so flattering a compliment. Shall I say it was that very indescribable and incomprehensible look which first caused me to regard you with curiosity, as the perfect resemblance in feature and bearing of one of the knights errant of former days. There was a touch of Don Quixote de la Mancha about you that was highly interesting, something between the Don and a light dragoon of the present day; a most worthy specimen of one of those doughty heroes, who were fain to go vagabondizing about from one end of the country to the other. I assure you I did not rest till I had inquired who that tall dark melancholy looking Hidalgo was, and when I heard of your adventure in that unhappy affair of my uncle's death, I determined to patronise you as a worthy descendant of those champions of whom it is my peculiar delight to read."

Pleasant as the first part of this good humoured sally was, the allusion to my unlucky deeds gave me a pang "sharp as the stiletto of the Portuguese," and I felt so far

from being one of those worthies' *sans peur et sans reproche*, that I looked upon myself as an impostor who feared to utter the truth.

"But I marvel," continued my companion, rising and looking round, "what keeps the knave groom so long with our horses; let us return to the village and meet him. I know not how it is with you, Mr. Blount, but whenever I am in the vicinity of such a record of former days as this, I always feel a sort of fascination to the spot, and cannot, without an effort, tear myself away. Methinks the spirits of my sires, venerable and grave looking, sigh in the gale, and glide about the dark and ruined shell. Look at that, "high uprear'd and abutting front"—within the apartment with the vast fire place and cavernous chimney, 'tis said a beautiful woman, the wife of a De Clifford, was foully done to death. What immense interest doth that legend give to each mouldering stone of the ruined tower! Here, perhaps, in this wing, "the night shriek disturbed the curtain'd sleep,"

And wither'd murder  
Alarmed by his sentinel the wolf  
Towards his design, mov'd like a ghost.



How pleasant too, it is to contemplate the lovely landscape around, whilst 'light thickens,' as Shakspeare so beautifully words it, 'and the crow makes wing to the rooky wood.' "

I felt the same unwillingness to leave this interesting scene, with so delightful a guide to point out its beauties, and we examined afresh each loop-hole and embrasure of the building, before we consented to quit it. As we did so, a loud and wild halloo saluted our ears from the road; and we beheld, in the distance, two or three dozen men, armed with pitchforks and bludgeons, rushing towards us. In a few minutes the meaning of this rout was made apparent, for down an undulation of the ground, (his ascent up the other side of which, had till then hidden his approach) came, with the speed of a race horse, an enormous and ferocious mastiff. The appearance of the brute in an instant shewed that he was raving mad, whilst the continued cry of the pursuers confirmed the fact.

Constance, who happened to be at that moment somewhat in front, stopped suddenly, looked round and turned deadly pale, appearing unable to move a step from the spot on which she

stood. The mastiff was, indeed, close upon her, and there seemed no hope of escape from a fate the most horrible to be conceived; for my part I was also sufficiently alarmed. I held a hunting-whip in my hand; but felt it was perfectly useless against this monster in a rabid state. Like lightning I stripped off my coat, and wrapping it round my right arm and hand, rushed upon the animal as he was about to spring upon my companion. I was so nearly too late, although I had done this in an instant, that as I struck the dog fairly in the mouth with my muffled fist, throwing my whole weight into the blow, he was scarcely a foot from her throat. The dog went over on his back with the buffet, and the next moment we were grappling together in deadly combat: a mortal conflict, upon rather unequal terms, since the one party, even if the vanquisher, must come off without scratch or wound in the struggle, or he would share the fate of the beast he was destroying. I felt this at the moment, and I felt moreover that the beautiful Constance, should I fail in destroying the rabid mastiff, would also be his victim, a thought which gave me the ferocity of a tiger. Throw-

ing myself head foremost upon the dog before he could gain his feet, indeed we almost went down together, with both hands I seized him by the throat, and disengaging myself from the coat, held him firmly in my grasp.

Man is immensely-powerful in his arms, when in such a position; and notwithstanding the strength of this enormous brute, I held him securely beneath me. His legs and claws tore my clothes to strips, yet still I held him fast, whilst his eyes almost started from their sockets with my deadly gripe, and with mouth wide open he turned from side to side in his endeavours to tear my hands and arms, as he choked, screamed, and almost roared with rage, agony, and madness. Indeed, I began to doubt my capability of holding him much longer, for I found myself growing exhausted with the violence and duration of this death-grapple. Madmen, it is said, are possessed of double the power of other persons, whilst the fit is upon them; and thus it appeared with this dog.

I turned my head, and beheld Lady de Clifford close beside me: horror was depicted in her countenance.

“Lady de Clifford,” I cried, “be quick, search the pocket of my coat for a knife. We must end this struggle instantly, or we are lost.”

Whilst she searched for the knife, I looked to the front in order to see our chance of succour: the pursuers were still some distance from us. I cared not for myself, could I but save my companion. Constance was fortunate in finding the knife, with which she again flew to my side. I bade her, soon as I ventured to grasp it, to fly and gain the shelter of the ruin, before I made my last effort, and used this dagger of mercy upon my deadly foe.

“Never!” she exclaimed; “I will not leave you.”

There was no time to urge it; but gradually getting a tighter grasp on the brute’s windpipe with my left hand, I suddenly quitted him with my right, seized the knife, and cutting deep into his throat, severed the carotid artery. Dropping then the knife, I again had him fast as before. The hot blood spouted over me as I held him for a few moments longer, and then his strength was gone for ever. I threw him from

me, and setting my foot upon his neck, once more reached the knife, and plunged it into his heart. All was then over, and the animal looking horribly in death, but no longer dangerous, lay quivering before us.

Constance leading the way down the slope upon which the castle was built, towards a beautiful stream which wound round the hillock, herself assisted in washing the blood from my hands and arms. I had received neither bite or wound, and she returned thanks to Heaven for our escape. How willingly could I have died to save one, who for the first time, appeared interested in my safety. Drawing a diamond ring from her finger, with tears in her eyes, she presented it to me.

“Wear this,” she said, “in remembrance of one whom you have saved from a fate too dreadful to contemplate.”

That ring I have never parted with: in prosperity I have held it sacred, and it has been a talisman which, when disgusted with life, and surrounded by the vicious and profligate, I have loved to look on, and become reconciled to a world containing the being who once owned it. In rags, misery, and sickness,

when a half naked wretch, I was dragged out amidst the dead from the convent cell, where neglected we had been left to die of typhus fever in Spain, that ring was still with me. Constance, now that the danger was passed, looked faint and ill. She was not, however, one of those who think it necessary to make a display of sensibility; on the contrary, I saw she made an effort and controlled the faintness she felt approaching; she, however, was obliged to support herself by leaning on my arm. As I found her getting really unable to walk, I seated her on the bank and sprinkled water in her face; who can blame me if I ventured to kiss the hand she proffered me? Perhaps she was angry at the liberty, or perchance the water from the brook recovered her, for the colour mounted to her cheek and she arose.

I assisted her up the hillock to look for our horses, as she said she felt sufficiently recovered to proceed home. By the time we had again reached the scene of our exploit, the villagers had arrived, and were crowding round the prostrate dog. Several came towards us when we appeared, and amongst them our

groom. All had been dreadfully alarmed, supposing that we had been torn almost to pieces; and my escape (for they had seen from the distance the encounter) they considered scarcely less than miraculous.

“Look here,” exclaimed a great burley fellow, the smith of the village, thrusting out a bar of iron, “see the power of yon dog; when he fastened on t’ oss, and I rammed the iron into his jaws, red hot as it was, he held it fast as if it had been a paunch, instead of a red hot coulter.”

This was a fact, for the dog having run raving mad into the smith’s forge, and fastened on the horse I had ridden, held him in his gripe, and what with the plunging of the frightened animal to break loose, and the fear of the dog, all assembled had rushed from the forge, except the master smith, who snatching a red hot bar of iron from the fire, thrust it into the dog’s mouth and forced him to quit his hold.

The groom now informing us of my horse being wounded, I ordered him to have it killed, and then to procure a hack, and follow us home. We accordingly walked forward, and

meeting a boy with Lady de Clifford's horses, once more mounted. As it was now growing late, we rode quickly homewards, Constance seemed fearful of saying much on the subject of our recent adventure.

"You have lost your charger, Mr. Blount, in this action," she observed, with a smile. "The horse you are now upon is my own riding horse, and which I this day ordered the groom to mount, as he has been out of work lately; will you accept him in place of the one you rode? A poor gift considering the service you have rendered."

Her quivering voice and soft eye spoke the feelings of her grateful heart, more than the gift she offered, or the thanks she uttered. I saw her in safety to the door of the hall. Lord Hardenbrass was standing before it, apparently awaiting her return. He stepped forward to assist her in dismounting. Before she did so, she put out her hand, grasped mine, and bade me adieu:

"Will you come to us to-morrow?" said she. "I have much to be grateful for, but I cannot speak my thanks now."

Of course I promised to do so, and alighting



from her steed, she vanished into the house. I lifted my hat to the young nobleman, who stood observing us ; but he either did not see, or would not return the salutation.

When I gained the turn in the road, which led me to the lodge, I wheeled round, in order to take my accustomed look at the hall, and could just distinguish my fair companion standing at her chamber-window. She retired when she saw me stop ; but I felt that I had made an impression on her heart, which, at that time, it was far from my intention or wish to form there.

I was now, as may be surmised, a frequent and cherished guest at Marston. My Lord Hardenbrass, who could never, it seems, deny himself enjoyment of the present moment, and whose party of young friends were awaiting him at Hareward, was off to join them there, when I arrived at Marston next day, and I therefore, for that time, found no interruption to the delight of mingling in the society of my new and fascinating friends. I appeared, indeed, to have become transplanted into another world, where all was new and beautiful. “ Out of this other Eden,” “ this demi paradise,” however, I felt

a presentiment that I should, by some means or other, be driven. How, alas! can I describe those few happy days in my existence, too happy to last—

Still 'tis pleasure tho' 'tis mixed with pain,  
To think on joys that ne'er can live again.

We were now often joined in our excursions by Miss Villeroy; and Mrs. Allworthy, her relative, seemed quite content to allow both the young ladies to be esquired and escorted occasionally in their walks and rides, by one who, she said, had proved himself capable of protecting them through the most dangerous of adventures.

One day, as we were riding together in the direction of the Grange, Constance again reverted to our old dwelling, whose turrets we could just see above the thick woods in the distance.

“You cannot think,” said she, “how much I should like to see the interior of that curious looking home of yours.”

I of course assured them of the pleasure such a visit would give me; and, provided they could gain the sanction of their chaperone, Mrs.

Allworthy, they promised to fix a day in the week to drive over.

It was now more than a month since I had received any communication from my father, which, whenever I gave myself the trouble of thinking about, struck me as rather singular. My time, however, was spent so delightfully, that I felt unwilling to imagine any thing could be amiss, whilst I myself was happy. Not having, therefore lately received any communication from him, I neglected from day to day to write to my parent.

On the day fixed upon, Miss Villeroy and her party arrived, according to promise, at the Grange. Mrs. Allworthy drove over in her carriage, the young ladies came on horseback.

As I knew how greatly it would delight visitors of the disposition of my fair friends, to be admitted to a place so curious and antique, with all the honours, I made every effort to receive them in proper form. Rooms, therefore, which had been closed up and untenanted for nearly a century, were thrown open; old articles of furniture routed out and put in requisition; unscored armour hung upon the walls, and even some old falconets

were mounted upon the battlements and fired as my visitors approached. The old bridge, too, which for many years had been allowed to rest quietly across the waters of the moat at the principal entrance, was on this occasion made to do duty, and in order that every proper form might be gone through, and my guests admitted in feudal style, I

Raised the portcullis, ponderous guard,  
The iron-studded gates unbarred,  
And let the draw-bridge fall !

Mrs. Allworthy I have but slightly noticed in this story. She was, however, well worthy of a more particular description than I have space to afford her. She was a spinster of nearly fourscore years of age, extremely eccentric in manners, and what the world would call an oddity. Active and sprightly as a girl of eighteen, she was diminutive and rather deformed in figure, while her features were by no means handsome. As it was her whim, moreover, to dress point device in the costume of the preceding century, she looked a perfect caricature. Full of talent, very satirical, and never hesitated to give her thoughts tongue, she could utter

bitter scourge to ill-conditioned or presumptuous persons, whilst to those whom she liked, she was a delighted companion. "Her memory was a mine," and being mistress of most modern languages, she appeared also to have studied every poet that had ever penned a stanza.

Three parts of her long life had been spent in travel, and she had written a voluminous work which had puzzled half the wise men of the East, upon the Hieroglyphics of Egypt.

With so amusing a companion to chaperone the young ladies, and who could readily enter into all our feelings of romance, the hours flew swiftly during their visit, and my guests were delighted with all they saw.

Wharncliffe Grange was one of those curious old irregular buildings, the very traces of which are now almost obliterated from the face of the country. The place that once knew the proud families which owned them as lords, now knows them no more, and the foundations of massive walls, scarcely to be traced in the green mounds that mark their site, is all that remains to tell of their whereabouts. Like many other edifices before

the times of the Tudors, it contained three moats, the principal one washed the walls of the main building, another surrounded the farm buildings, whilst a third encircled the ancient garden of the establishment, so that the dark waters, overshadowed in some places by the frowning walls of the edifice, and in others by luxuriant willows, (which hanging over the banks, shewed their hoar leaves in the glassy stream), gave it the appearance of one of those old châteaux which we meet with in a Flemish picture.

After viewing the pleasure-grounds and gardens, we returned to the house, and spent some time in rambling over it. Scarcely a room escaped the curiosity of Mrs. Allworthy, so great was the interest she displayed in examining a building so curious and antique, and which could boast of having been visited, in those troublous days, by King John. In the long oak-panelled gallery hung many of the portraits of my ancestors. With one old picture Mrs. Allworthy was especially taken.

“This gloomy-looking individual, with the peaked beard and the long rapier,” said the old lady, “I am quite sure has some dismal

legend attached to him. The picture reminds me of one I used to see in early days when I visited Horace Walpole ; it possesses an evil eye. See, Constance, like the portrait of Lord Falkland, go to what part of the gallery you will, the eyes are still upon you."

"You are quite right, Madam," said the old housekeeper, who had accompanied us through the rooms, and who dearly loved to expatiate upon the virtues and gallantry of the grim figures which adorned their walls. "You are quite right, Madam, that picture has a story attached to it, which is I think extremely curious : it is the portrait of Sir Herbert Blount, who was savagely murdered during the civil wars of Charles the First, by a party of Oliver Cromwell's dragoons."

"Delightful !" said the old lady. "I knew I was right ; the face of that cavalier is as a book, ' where men may read strange matters ; ' there's battle, murder, and sudden death in every feature. For my part, I will not dine till I hear the story of his life. Come, Mr. Blount, with your sanction, we will sit in the recess of this window and hear the history."

The young ladies had been much delighted

with the garrulous old housekeeper, who was almost as great an original in appearance and feature as some of the portraits she loved to speak of. They accordingly seconded Mrs. Allworthy's request, and seating themselves in one of the deep recesses of an old bay window, which beetled over the moat beneath, as the sun streamed through the many coloured diamond panes upon the oaken floor and walls of the gallery, we listened to the following exemplification of the horrors of civil war.



## CHAPTER VII.

In winter's tedious nights, sit by the fire  
With good old folks, and let them tell thee tales  
Of woful ages long ago betid :  
And, ere thou bid good night, to quit their grief,  
Tell thou the lamentable fall of me,  
And send the hearers weeping to their beds.

SHAKSPERE.

"THAT picture, ladies," said the old house-keeper, "is my especial favourite. 'Tis the portrait of Sir Herbert Blount, who was knighted by King Charles (that grace of kings) after the battle of Edgehill. The portrait which hangs straight before us is that of his father, who was slain in Naseby fight. This youth fled, when all was lost, to the Grange, in the hope of raising men for another effort. The mansion was deserted by all the

domestics except one old man, a confidential servant, and butler of the family; for the cavalier, his master, with the true duty and loyalty of his order, had pressed into the service, and taken with him, in the troop he raised, and led to the field, every man and boy who could wield a weapon on the King's side, leaving his own home and property almost defenceless. Two other sons fell with him in that field; Sir Herbert being the only one of the family engaged who escaped to tell the tale.

“His wife (the beautiful creature whose portrait you noticed in the room below) met him by stealth with their only child, then an infant at the breast, two nights after he returned here, having been conveyed from her place of concealment in a cottage some miles off, by old Gurney, the steward.

“It was whilst they sat in fancied security in the oak-panelled room below, whose windows look out upon the moat, lamenting, perhaps, ‘the times abuse,’ and their present melancholy situation and recent loss, that, on a somewhat tempestuous night, they were surprised and captured by a troop of Cromwell's dragoons.

“Taking advantage of a moment when the moon was completely hidden, they emerged from their covert in the woodland, and quietly surrounding the building, obtained entrance by throwing an enormous pine-tree they had felled for the purpose across the moat, alongside the uplifted bridge, lashing it with horse-girths to the wood work on their own side. ’Twas thus these miscreants crossed, one by one, over this somewhat perilous pass, to the outbuildings, in safety—all but one man, who, losing his balance in the attempt, fell into the dark waters of the moat. The weight of his harness in an instant carried him to the bottom, while his comrades, with their usual sternness of purpose, heeding not his fate, quickly gained the opposite side. Stephen Gurney, the old steward, was captured in the stables of the building by the first troopers who got over. They lugged him to the brink of the moat, in order to dispose of him quietly, lest he should raise any alarm to their victims withinside the mansion.

“The leader of the Cromwellian troop had been promoted to his present command from a butcher’s stall in Smithfield market. Like

Cade, he was inspired with the spirit of putting down kings and princes. Valiant he was too—'for beggary is valiant'—and in and out of the field was wont to behave himself as though he had been in his own slaughter-house.

"Such a man was deserving of the preferment he obtained: slaughter was his passion, and he had vowed not to leave one lord or gentleman alive, nor to spare any but such as went on clouted shoon. He thought fit, however, in this instance, to put restraint upon his feelings and stay the purpose of his men. The old steward, being gagged, was made to act as guide and introducer by the most easy and quiet access to the interior of the somewhat intricate building.

"Would to heaven!" exclaimed the eccentric old housekeeper, "the blackguard who fell into and perished miserably in our moat, had been its only victim. But, alas! there were other and worthier offerings to its depths on that dreadful night.

"The young cavalier and his lady were sitting, in fancied security, in the old tapestried room below, when they were suddenly startled by the harsh clash of armour, and the hurried and

heavy tread of the troopers, as they dashed into the hall of the building, and dispersed in various directions to secure its inmates.

“Half a dozen ruffians burst into the tapestried room as the occupants started to their feet with the sudden alarm, and made at Sir Herbert with uplifted weapons. Sir Herbert Blount was a terrific man to encounter, and although surprised, and thus taken at advantage, had his wits about him. He instantly overthrew the heavy table before him as they came on, thus bringing the foremost assailant to the ground, and by its barrier, for the moment, intercepting the impetuosity and fury of the assault. Drawing then one of the petronels from his girdle, he shot the man nearest him through the brain, and hurling the discharged weapon into the teeth of the next, he awaited not to be on the defensive, but dashing with his long broadsword into the midst, cut his way through his opponents. He might perhaps have got clear through the hall, and eventually escaped to the woods; but he was not the man to desert his wife and child; and having thus shaken himself clear for the moment, he turned about and assailed his deadly foes in

turn, flying upon them with the rage and fury of a madman.

“The old steward, meantime, who had rushed into the apartment with the troopers, crouching over the lady and child in one of the deep recesses of the windows, endeavoured to protect them from the violence and rush of this unequal fight.

“The room, meanwhile, resounded with the fearful cuts they dealt each other, and was filled with the smoke of the fire-arms of the troopers, whilst three of their bodies (killed by blows which would have almost felled an ox) lay already dead upon the oaken floor. The remaining ruffians, however, (for when did these fellows perform their work negligently, or by halves?) kept the knight well in work. He had now again succeeded in gaining his position behind the overthrown table, his opponents once more crowding upon him from either hand. Without turning his head, as he ever and anon drew back, and darted from side to side to avoid the cuts of his opponents, and dealt his own sweeping blows, he called to the old steward to fly and save the lady and child. The old man starting up, half bewil-

dered with alarm, seized upon the infant ; but the mother having fainted, he was unable to raise and carry her off.

“With the child in his arms, however, he vanished from the apartment, rushed down the stairs, hoping to conceal himself in some of the offices below, and, as use is second nature, he made for the kitchen. Pausing there for a moment to recover his scattered wits, he was aware of the rapid approach of heavy steps in the vaulted passages. The fire was burning in the grate—but there was nothing else for it ; and opening the oven-door, he threw the infant in, and again retracing his steps through the passages and up the stairs, closely followed by his pursuers and bewildered with alarm, entered once more the room where the before-mentioned scuffle had taken place.

“The encounter was now over, the apartment being filled with the remainder of these savages, who having collected from the upper part of the house, where they had first rushed, had descended on hearing the shots fired in the affray. Sir Herbert was now made a prisoner, and stood manacled in his father’s halls, his hands

bound behind him with his own scarf. A few minutes had served indeed to effect much. His lady had (to escape the dishonour she feared) precipitated herself headlong into the moat beneath the windows, and perished; whilst the nurse of the infant, who had been dragged from one of the apartments above, lay dead amongst the slaughtered troopers on the floor. The old butler, accordingly, was seized the instant he entered.

“ ‘Place that old sinner,’ said the leader of the troop, sheathing his sword, ‘beside the malignant, his master. We will deal with them in good time, according to their desert. There shall not one of the inmates of this accursed den of wickedness, nor their serving-men, or their maids even, escape the edge of our good fox-broadswords this blessed night. We will smite them, comrades, sorely; for they have ever been a sharp and rankling thorn in the sides of the chosen of the Lord. Praise Heaven Smash, take a couple of files below, and search for meat and drink wherewith to repair our party after their forced march. Thou art pretty sure of finding plenty of the creature-comfort here for us all, though we



have trapped so thin a garrison. These malignants have ever special care to line their insides, whether it be fair or foul weather with 'em. To fill, to swill, and to call for more, is their vocation. And now, Herbert Blount, commonly called Sir Herbert Blount,' he continued, throwing himself into an easy chair which he had ordered to be brought forward, 'if you have any religion in you that you fear, I pray you call upon whatever deity you serve, or whomever else you hope salvation from, to receive your miserable soul; for in two minutes more, you and that servant of thy family, and follower of your sinful ways, shall receive in full the desert of your malignant conduct, and tenant the dirty waters of your stinking moat. Let a couple of files do execution upon these accursed Amalekites,' he continued; 'and we will then uplift our voices in song, and return thanks to the Lord of Hosts, ere we proceed to refresh our inward bodies. Drag forth also into the hall the carcasses of our men, upon whom this lewd son of Belial hath committed murder.

" 'Stephen Gurney,' whispered the manacled cavalier to the old man beside him, whose

arms, from his feeble appearance and long white hair, though not from any respect to his age, they had neglected to bind—' Stephen Gurney, as matters stand, we must both die. Thou art unbound: I see thy pruning-knife at thy girdle; cut through the scarf which ties my hands, and do exactly as you see me do; perchance we may even yet escape and revenge us.'

"Quick as lightning the devoted servant severed the silken scarf, even while the foremost trooper, having loaded, was advancing and blowing the match of his piece. None had seen the movement.

" 'Hold a moment,' said the officer. 'Shoot me that white-headed offender first. Methinks it is but just that the master of the household should see his servant receive his wages in full, the proper remuneration of his hire, ere he himself obtains also a passport to the devil he has served so well.'

"At this moment, and whilst the parliamentary officer was drawling out his orders, Sir Herbert, turning sharp round, leaped head foremost from the open casement into the moat. Half a dozen reports from the ready matchlocks of the

firing party rattled after, and followed his exit, and all rushed to the windows of the apartment.

"In the midst of the confusion the old steward was overthrown by the rush, trodden under foot, and forgotten.

"The cornet's voice, sounding above the din of the straggling fire from the casement, directed a party of the men to make across the drawbridge, and intercept their victim on the opposite bank of the moat, himself darting from the room and leading the way.

"Meanwhile, Sir Herbert, having fathomed the depth of the moat, again rose to the surface. As he made for the other side, he heard the drawbridge come thundering down, and the heavy and rapid steps of the pursuers. Looking across, he felt the impossibility of clambering up the bank and escaping to the woods.

"The moon shone out brightly for the moment, and a dropping fire was again commenced from the windows of the tapestried room. More than one ball struck the knight as the old steward, having gathered himself up, forgetting his own danger, and himself forgotten, gazed upon the scene, mixed up amongst

his deadly foes. As each shot took effect, he beheld his beloved master dart in the stream.

"Sir Herbert, however, wounded as he was, turned about in the water, and swimming close under the windows whence they were firing, made for a grating which half barricaded a cavernous passage leading all along under the vast building, and through which the waters flowed—a dark and horrible-looking hole, which none in these days can tell the use of, or why such cavern ever was invented. The noise of the waters within, when they are agitated in a tempestuous night, is plainly to be heard almost in every room of the building, and is horrible to listen to at such hour. Midway down is the deep and ample pool, or well, whence is pumped up the water for the use of the interior of the Grange.

"Sir Herbert hunted thus like some otter, shot at too, and severely wounded, crept wearily over the iron grating, and was lost to sight in the jaws of the unexplored passage.

"The Parliamentary officer and his party just arrived as he disappeared down on the other side, and with a view halloo, discharged a

volley after him. Had any other but the soldiers of Cromwell been the hounds in this chase, so brave a quarry might have even yet escaped. The butcher's cur who led them was, however, crafty as he was venom-mouthed. He was not easily to be baffled.

"'Four men,' he said, 'remain here, and fire at whatsoever attempts to return out of yon ugly trap: we have the beast here, sure enough now. The remainder follow me. We will drown the beaver under his own lodge. I am mistaken if there be not a place of egress as well as of entrance into yon pleasant refuge.'

"So saying, the valiant cornet led the way round the building to the opposite side; and quietly lying with his party, their faces down close to the green bank of the moat, (like a section of riflemen of the present day), calmly waited to observe if any sound or sign gave token of the unfortunate cavalier having survived the horrors of, and made passage through the tunnel. They had waited but a few moments, when a reverberating sound, as of something moving under the building, showed the

Parliamentarian subaltern that he had not taken blood-thirsty ambushade in vain.

“Wounded as he was, the resolute cavalier had passed along the cavern, the waters of which (tinged with his life-blood) reached nearly to his breast, and floundering into the well in the middle, had succeeded in crossing it. Proceeding then forward, he gained the opposite grating, and twisting one arm into its bars, paused to recover strength and breath ere he made further attempt to clamber over, and escape.

“‘Silent as the grave,’ whispered the prostrate cornet; ‘wait for the word. We will take him alive, and make him pay well for all this extra fatigue in hunting him.’

“Slowly and languidly the cavalier began to drag himself up, and clamber over the iron grating. He looked like some hunted and half-drowned beast of prey, as he dropped (after the fashion of a water-rat from its hole) into the inky stream, and swam across. Scarcely had he reached the middle, when his enemy, starting to his feet with a shout, followed by his myrmidons, and presenting their pieces, bade him come forward and surrender.

"The victim stopped with the surprise for the moment, and almost sank; rallying, however, and recovering himself, he kept onward.

"As he neared the side, he held up one hand for them to forbear firing, and let him land. 'Help me out of the water,' said he, 'or I die,' and, seizing on the offered gauntlet of the officer, who had reached out in the eager desire to be himself the capturer, drew himself up nearly to the bank. Seizing him then in an instant with his other hand by the buff sword-belt the Parliamentary wore, the cavalier, with all his remaining strength, leaped backwards into the stream, and both went down together. The waters, bubbling and agitated, showed the struggle that was going on beneath; and once the buff coat of the Cromwellian was seen to roll up above the surface, but as quickly was dragged under again by the determined grasp of his antagonist, and then the waters, settling quietly down, and starting only an occasional cluster of bubbles, showed the death grapple was ended for ever.

"Thus died the chivalrous Sir Herbert Blount. He was a man who, from his high talents,

virtue, and loyalty, deserved a better end than to be thus hunted and killed, like some obnoxious reptile, and, together with his unfortunate wife, left to become a swollen and abhorred sight to the affrighted peasantry of his own domain who for many years afterwards, with fearful glance avoided this deserted building ; fearing to encounter the spectres which are, indeed, still said at times to wander and flit about these grounds, and haunt the waters of our moat. Not quite unrevenged, however, did he fall, since he died conscious of being in some sort the avenger of his wrongs, whilst he held in his determined grasp the miserable carcass of this wretched tool of the red-nosed Cromwell.

“To continue, then, and end this story of the picture, you must know that the old servant,—whilst thus leaning out of the window at which he had taken his station, having seen the cavalier enter the tunnel, and surmising his intent and means of escape ; being also still disregarded, in the interest of the chase, by those who were there spectators with him,—quietly withdrew from the room, and hurrying to the further side



through the interior of the mansion, entered a small closet-like apartment, the window of which beetled over the other entrance to this cavern. Here he was again a breathless and horrified spectator of his lord and master's second abortive attempt at escape, and miserable end.

"With the death of the cavalier, the aged steward's energies began to arise. He had hitherto been a trembling and almost idiotic driveller, hurrying hither and thither, acting from instinct in his master's cause, yet unable to do aught but as chance directed.

"With the deaths of almost all he cared for on earth, died all his further desire of life. Having beheld them thus killed before his eye he drew a long breath, and set his teeth in rage and despair ; but suddenly recollecting the infant in the oven, resolved instantly to seek for, and if it yet lived, to save it.

"It was at this moment, whilst the troopers were somewhat troubled about the unlooked-for accident which had happened to their leader, that a better chance of success was opened to him. He heard them calling and hallooing to each other ; whilst the sergeant of the party,

having assumed command of the troop, and ordered the trumpeter to sound out, and recall the stragglers into the building, the prolonged notes of the assembly ringing out of the open casement, echoed and reverberated through the woods around. No time was to be lost. The old man sprang upon his legs from the kneeling-posture he had sunk into, and opening a small door which communicated with a narrow staircase to the lower part of the house, got into the passages leading to the servants' offices, and ascertaining that the kitchen was still empty, stole in and sought the child.

"It was lucky he came at that moment, for the infant was not only still alive, but sending forth such sturdy cries at this unwonted and close imprisonment, that the slaughtermen, who in two minutes afterwards were engaged in cooking and carousing by this very fire-place, would have been directly guided to its place of concealment. The old man, dragging the infant forth, soothed it, and bore it off, muffled up in the lappels of his doublet. He then got out at one of the back-doors which led towards the stables of the mansion, and with

stealthy pace he crossed the yard, and entering them, clambered up a manger, and ascended into the hay-loft. Here, after nursing the infant to sleep, he laid it quietly down, and proceeded to reconnoitre the state of affairs without-side.

“The stragglers, obedient to their discipline, were now returning to the interior. From an arrow-slit in one of the small flanking towers of the outbuildings, into which he had crept and perched himself, the old man watched them pass over the bridge, and enter the building.

“After waiting a short time, he hurried back for his charge, and with fear and trembling lest he should be seen, safely passed to the other side, and diving into the nearest thicket, escaped undiscovered.

“It chanced that a small spaniel, of the breed afterwards so much cultivated by Charles the Second, and which had been kept in the stables, had followed the steward without his noticing it. He was now first made aware of its having accompanied him, by its springing forward ere he had proceeded many paces into the woodland, and barking furiously.

The old man stopped for an instant, and observing in what direction the dog had scented the alarm, turned off to the left, and gradually approaching the border of the plantation, cautiously looked forth.

“In the open glade before him, standing in the long grass, where (before they had usurped its privacy) the sequestered deer had loved to couch and herd, he saw picketed, and standing in a long line ready for mounting on the instant, the horses of the very troop who had made their successful onslaught on the Grange. About half-a-dozen soldiers were standing dismounted in the front in charge of them, whilst two or three others, who had been alarmed by the barking of the pet spaniel, had entered, and were beating about the covert before which they were stationed. The dog, who had retreated after the steward, and continued to keep up that short grunting bark, so natural to their timid kind, again began to dart out and return whilst the old man was reconnoitring, and directed once more the attention of the scouts to his whereabouts. The steward saw his imminent peril: he caught the animal up, and with it

under one arm, and the child in the other, again dived into the covert.

“The faster he sped, the more the animal barked ; he heard the troopers shouting behind him, and had no choice left in the matter. It was the little silky favourite of his murdered mistress, which had at first saved him from the very capture it was now as surely bringing upon him. The infant must perish, or the dog ; both were now exerting their lungs in concert, making a duet in the woods, which scared the night-bird from his roost. Putting down the child, he placed the dog on the grass, and whilst it licked the hand with which he held it down, searching with the other for the gardening-knife which had already stood him in good stead once before on that night, he cut deep into its heart. Then again snatching up the child, and stifling its cries, he continued his flight.

“By his superior knowledge of the winding deer-paths of the plantation, the faithful steward quickly outstripped his pursuers, and once more, setting the infant on the ground, paused for a few minutes to collect his scattered senses, and consider the safest course to be taken.

“The uncertainty of the time was such, that man could scarcely trust his brother; and nearest and dearest kindred fought in opposition, hand to hand. He resolved to place the boy in concealment where he had before remained with the mother; but which, being full ten miles off, in his present feeble condition, he knew not how to reach. At length, however, he resolved to attempt a plan which just at that moment flashed across his brain; and with all the speed his aged limbs permitted, he hurried towards its execution.

“He made a *détour*, and after some little time came into the wood beyond where the cavalry were standing picketed.

“The old man had been born on the estate, and knew each glade and copse for twenty miles around, having been a huntsman in his youth. He made the infant a leafy bed, and placed it in the hollow of an aged oak, which grew beside a winding path not far from the main road; and gaining the border of the wood, once more cautiously reconnoitred the cavalry from the opposite point to that where he had first been made aware of their presence.

“ They stood within about a couple of hundred yards from his position. The men who watched them he discerned were quietly pacing up and down their front, whilst ever and anon the moonbeams glanced upon the shining hauberk of the sentinel (who stalked along their rear rank), as he turned, and heedfully looked across the open glade to see that nothing approached unchallenged to interrupt them. The old butler, watching his time, threw himself upon his face in the long grass, and began to crawl towards them, every now and then cautiously raising his grey head to reconnoitre the trooper who made his invariable round in rear; staying his progress whilst the soldier passed, and then again worming his way like some creeping adder through the long grass and fern.

“Wet with the heavy dew, and chilled as if up to his neck in a river, his old heart was warm within, and he heeded not at that time what would have perhaps struck him with death on any other occasion. He was now within a few paces of the line of horses; and, raising his head, he watched for the accustomed round of

the heedful sentinel. One more turn he calculated he must wait, and then he could safely reach the steeds.

"With yet more caution he drew himself slowly forwards; but his calculation was made incorrectly, and the trooper appeared on his round, and was advancing from the other end directly upon him as he crawled. It was impossible to go forward—to retreat was hopeless: and he sank down directly in the Cromwellian's path.

"The game he felt was up—all was lost; and his heart almost died within him as he heard the heavy boot and jingling spur within a few paces of his prostrate body. At this moment, as if his discovery was not sufficiently apparent, a bright red flame, and a dreadful report, like a powder-mill blowing up within a quarter of a mile of them, displayed the whole country for miles and miles around.

"The horses of Cromwell, used as they were to the sight, sound, and smell, of the 'villanous saltpetre' in all its varieties, started back, and strained at the bridles by which they were attached together.



"The trooper stopped short in his walk, and calling aloud to the affrighted steeds to soothe their alarm, struck in amongst them, and made his way to their front, in order to see the meaning of this terrific sound, just as he was about to stumble over the prostrate form of the trembling steward.

"The old man, thanking God for his escape, took care to profit by the chance. He knew, none so well as he, the meaning of that awful sound. The troop had discovered the ammunition which had been secreted in the vaults of the castle by himself, and had blown it up.

"With an inward curse upon their prying souls, he started up, and cautiously opening himself a way through the troop-horses, stood the next moment secreted amongst them.

"The guards were now standing grouped together, and endeavouring to peer through the plantation before them, when suddenly their outlying sentinel challenged some person advancing upon him from the direction of the Grange. It was one of the band. He brought word that his comrades were close at hand, and that having fired the Grange, they would march

on the instant towards Ferrybridge. Whilst this conversation was taking place, the old butler had, with his trusty friend the pruning-knife, busied himself by cutting through several of the horses' reins; he then drew a petronel from one of the holsters near him, and quietly ascending into the saddle, clapped the muzzle of the weapon to the shoulder of the steed by his side, and fired it into his body. The horse sprang forward into the air, and plunging headlong into the wood, fell struggling amongst the trees, whilst at the same moment the whole line broke from their fastenings, galloped in different directions over the open glade. The steward's horse, alarmed like his fellows, reared up, and attempted to bolt, but the old man restrained his fury, and wheeling him short round, spurred like lightning towards the spot where he had left the child.

"The Cromwellian sentinels, in utter astonishment at seeing their steeds flying in all directions, (whilst one, desperately wounded, and struggling in the agonies of death, lay bleeding close before them, and a man, apparently risen from the earth, was mounted and galloping off in rear upon another), uttered a cry of rage,

fired their carbines at random after the spectre horseman, and hurried off, in order to try and recover their chargers.

“Meanwhile, the dismounted troopers we have before mentioned at the Grange, having drunk their fill, and refreshed themselves with whatever they could find at hand, in their search after the old steward, (who they felt persuaded was lurking somewhere in the vaults below,) stumbled upon the powder which had been secreted there by order of the old cavalier in the commencement of these troublous times. They then returned to the upper part of the building, and the sergeant, calling off those men who were engaged in destroying the pictures, and hacking to pieces whatever else they could find of value in the different apartments, after laying a train of communication, (which he left a file of men with orders to fire as soon as he had gained the open park in front), marched off in order to remount and proceed forward on their route.

“Just as they reached the belt of woodland we have mentioned, and were about to enter, the files in advance fell back upon them, with the alarm that they heard the report of fire-

arms, and the rapid approach of a body of horse, and supposed they were about to be charged by an ambuscade of cavalry. The sergeant wheeled his troopers into line at the double; he heard the crashing sound of horses tearing through the thick underwood, and conceiving a sudden dash of cavaliers were upon his dismounted force, gave the word to his people to handle their carbines, and stand firm. The next moment a dozen steeds, dashing into the open space, were received by the bullets, which, the instant they broke cover, was poured upon them by his party.

“When the thin blue smoke of their discharge had dispersed into the clear night air, those worthy soldiers discovered, to their wonder and dismay, that they had fired upon their own chargers, five of which lay struggling upon the grass before them. This was, indeed, rather a disastrous expedition for the round-headed detachment, and the old crafty steward proved an evil genius to them during the time they thus honoured his neighbourhood with a visit.

“Whilst this mistake was occurring to the Cromwellian soldiery and they were being by

initiated into the mishaps which had be-  
r steeds by the steward's mischievous  
ce, and the sergeant, on discovering  
er, was giving direction to repair the  
and despatching men in different  
to catch the affrighted steeds, the  
urging the troop horse he bestrode  
ght and main, was doubling and  
his way back to the leafy bed in the  
, where he had deposited his orphan  
Having found it there unmolested  
afety, he hastily snatched it up, and  
it up in his cloak before him on the  
of his demipique, he once more set  
to his horse's heels, and almost flew  
road before him.

having traversed it for some distance,  
into a dark and overshadowed byway,  
se windings he was familiar, and con-  
is journey down it. The lane led  
the town of Knaresborough, near  
a small secluded farm-house, dwelt  
time before, in safety and happiness,  
daughter and her spouse. Now,  
both were dead, and the cottage was

untenanted ; the husband having been slain in the field of Naseby, and his wife, whilst her house was being sacked and burned over her head, having fallen a victim to the brutality of a body of the saints who had happened to discover its privacy.

"It was here, in this sequestered spot, the wife of Sir Herbert Blount had latterly lain concealed, whilst her husband and family were engaged in the bloody game, in playing which they had thus lost their all.

"As the old steward (blessing his stars that he had thus far outwitted his enemies, and almost reached the refuge he sought) urged his way through the intricate windings of the deeply-rutted and sandy lane where, at times, although the moon shone out brightly, he could hardly pick his road, and was getting deeper and deeper into what, at that period, was the extensive and thickly-wooded forest of Knaresborough, the poor remains of which may yet be seen, he came suddenly, before he was aware of it, into the midst of a strong body of horsemen.

"At first he felt the blood rush back to his

surprise and alarm ; but a glance  
on shone full upon them) discovered  
the silken scarfs, and the once gay  
which crested their head-pieces, that  
length fallen into the society of friends,  
he was in the midst of a troop of

vel-stained and war-worn coats in  
had thus presented themselves to  
steward, together with their livid  
countenances, showed the fatigues  
ons they had undergone since the  
had made them thus fugitives in  
land. They were indeed a party  
gallant followers, who, having man-  
t so far clear of the hot pursuit,  
themselves together, and were, by  
a woods and dens during day,  
marches by night, seeking to reach  
of safety, where they might stand  
es, and finally escape beyond sea.

parties at this time thus successfully  
orn one end of the kingdom to the  
uently passing almost through the  
ops which everywhere surrounded



them, cutting to pieces the patrols they occasionally fell in with, and after performing prodigies of valour and enduring incredible fatigue, eventually escaped slaughter, and got in safety to the continent. Many such parties, on the other hand, were killed in the attempt, or taken and afterwards executed.

“Our steward was captured before he could utter a sentence, for they had heard his approach in the windings of the lane, and were drawn up in readiness. He was taken to the leader of the band, and desired to give an account of himself on the instant. The cavalier to whom he related the events which had just transpired, was a gentleman of that part of the county, by name Sir Thomas Thornhill. His estate being near the Grange, he was well acquainted with its late inmates, for the two families had been connected in former days by marriage.

“As he sat on his wearied horse, once his proud war-steed, but now with head lobed down, ‘dropping the hide and hips,’

And in his pale dull mouth the gimmal bit  
Lying foul with grass,



thus in adversity looked the worthy  
relative of that ancestor who, in the field  
of battle, had won the notice of Harry the

Thomas heard the story of the death  
of his friend, and of the murder of his wife at  
the same time, and then with feelings of anger  
and grief, and then with feelings of anger  
and grief. Having hastily asked whereabouts  
the Lancastrian party might be now fallen  
he ascertained from the old steward  
that they were in the very route they were in-  
to take. After a few words to those  
around him, and forgetting their own situation,  
they resolved to avoid all towns and villages, and  
to seek for subsistence as they thus  
went onward), they resolved to attack their  
enemies the Roundheads, once more, and to  
bring about the death of their ally. Accordingly,  
leading the steward to his place of refuge,  
Thomas put his party instantly in motion,  
being well acquainted with every turn  
of the road, led them onwards by the way in  
which the old man had just escaped.

Coming then into the main road, they made  
scene of the exploits we have just nar-

rated ; and quickly arrived near the entrance of the chase or park in which the Grange is situate. They then proceeded with something more of deliberation and caution ; and, having entered its precincts, they drew up their little force, and sent out scouts to ascertain the situation of their foes.

“ As Sir Thomas Thornhill's party was small, and the Cromwellians were never to be despised as foes, it was necessary to go warily to work with them. The scouts found them with their mishaps in some measure repaired ; as, although it had taken them some time to effect, they had succeeded in capturing many of their stray steeds. Those men who had been dismounted by their own mistake, in consequence of the firing upon the horses as they broke cover, intended to mount behind some of their comrades—a practice much used in the wars of the time, even by the great Gustavus Adolphus of the North.

“ Sir Thomas himself reconnoitred them from the cover at the end of the avenue, where he had brought his party up, rapidly ; and with as little noise as possible, he drew out his troop into

ade before him. Here, shadowed by  
s, he formed them, and putting him-  
their head, with one wave of his good  
he set spurs to his horse, and led them  
their hated foes.

Cromwellian sergeant (who, doubtless,  
nking of the promotion he conceived  
him in the regiment by the death-va-  
nich had that night been made at the  
instead of the promotion he was about  
and which was most likely equal to  
of immortality in the infernal regions),  
at this moment striding down the front  
the troop, in order to mount his own  
and give the order to his men. As he  
their right, he heard a sudden exclama-  
alarm, and the thundering sound of the  
proach of a body of horse.

turned round, and beholding his party  
in flank by a troop of cavalry, roared to  
to mount, and flung himself upon his  
ed. Before his followers had time to  
e order, the Cavaliers were upon them,  
wn went man and horse with the im-  
y of the shock.

"Sir Thomas gave them small time to repair their confusion ; but having them thus at advantage, his party cut them down like cattle in the shambles. Scarcely a trooper of Cromwell escaped to tell the tale of that night-skirmish ; almost to a man they were cut to pieces within a few yards of the place in which they had thus unexpectedly been assailed.

"To return to the old steward : he continued his true duty and devoted care towards the child of his murdered master and mistress, by carefully tending it whilst in this place of refuge, where he thought it safest for some time to remain ; performing towards it the office of nurse, and bringing it up by hand with as much tenderness and attention, as if it had been thus reared under its own parent's eye.

"After awhile he removed himself and the infant to his beloved old Grange, and there remained in safety, unmolested for some time. Yet so fearful was the old man of being discovered and interrupted in his retreat, that he seemed to dread intercourse with all mankind. In order, therefore, to scare the curious from attempting to pry into his secret, and the half de-

ansion, he not unfrequently equipped some of the old armour he found in the vaults of the Grange, and was once or twice seen by the few affrighted peasants who passed that way at night, stealing through the woods and grounds, and stalking around the walls of the moat, appearing as though the ghost of his murdered master, thus 'in the moonlight,' 'revisited at times the glimpses of the moon.' It would seem that he loved to look down on the surface of those waters, beneath which his master's body lay rotting amid the weeds, to fatten the eels and lazy fish which its depths abounded.

Thus did the place obtain so dreadful a reputation that at last not a peasant would condescend to approach it alone within half a mile, night or day; and the old man remained there, together with its rightful heir, sole and undisputed possession of the building.

Time the child grew apace under the care of a somewhat eccentric old nurse, who appeared to have taken a fresh lease of life, for the sole purpose of being its nurse and preserver.

At some few years, after the trans-

actions we have narrated, and during the Protectorate of Cromwell, that a wild and haggard-looking individual, with hair and beard white as the snow-flake, and descending below his waist; his whole appearance more like some spotted and livid corpse just disinterred from the earth, and his emaciated limbs only half covered by the tattered remains of an old embroidered suit, (which, apparently, from its remains of rich lacing, had belonged to a person of condition), appeared one evening at the portal of Falcon Hall, on the borders of Derbyshire. He demanded to be admitted on important matters into the presence of Sir Thomas Thornhill, the proprietor of the domain. In his hand he led a well-grown boy, of about ten years of age.

"The child, like himself, was ill clad, in rude and uncouth-fashioned clothes, coarsely sewn together, while in look was as wild as his companion, staring with surprise at all around him, as if he had been but newly caught in the woods, and clinging to the tattered cloak of his aged protector, as though he feared to find an enemy in every face he looked on.

"The old man was admitted into the presence of Sir Thomas, who, together with his



were seated in one of those oak-panelled  
rooms we now rarely meet with (unpro-  
bably over-civilized taste, and barbarian  
in the buildings of that period. The  
look of his appearance and singularity of  
dress somewhat startled and surprised  
his associates.

Almost blind with age, he walked up to  
the table beside which the Baronet was seated,  
holding the merits of a flagon of Rhenish,  
and staring him hard and anxiously in  
the face for some little time, thus addressed

'Art thou—tell me truly—art thou Sir  
Thomas Thornhill, of Falcon Hall?'

'I have reason to believe myself such person,'

Sir Thomas, smiling at the look of  
surprise and alarm with which the children, who  
were collected around, stared upon this apparition.  
'What am I to consider has procured  
this visit from so peremptory and unceremo-  
nious a querist?'

'Alas! it is not the man I sought,'  
said the insane-looking old man, falling  
forward and clasping the little boy to his breast.  
'This is not the man I hoped

to find here. It must be his son, though,' he exclaimed aloud. 'Sir Thomas Thornhill, how long is it since your father died?'

" 'Seven years back, he fell in the field of ———, in Flanders,' answered Sir Thomas, willing to humour the eccentricity of the stranger, whose manner interested him.

" 'Did you ever hear him speak of meeting with Stephen Gurney, the steward of the Moated Grange,' said the stranger, 'one night in Knaresborough Forest, as he was escaping from Cromwell's power; and on which night he and his party encountered and cut to pieces a detachment of the parliamentary horse in Berrywell Chase?'

" 'Oftimes have I heard him tell of that meeting,' returned Sir Thomas; 'and how the faithful Gurney had saved the only child of Sir Herbert Blount on that night of horrors, and was making for Newbold Cottage, in order to conceal himself and charge. Since my return to this part of the world, at his urgent request, many times repeated to me; that if ever I reached my native country, I would seek for that old man and child, I have visited those parts; but I found the cottage in



d, after spending some time in search-  
neighbourhood around, I could hear  
s of such persons ever having been  
e. Indeed, I had almost forgotten  
matter till you thus brought it again  
embrance.'

was a fault,' said the old man, abrupt-  
should have searched far and near, sea  
to find out the fate of one so left  
ed-for in those wild times; whose  
l fought side by side with your own  
st the fiends in human form who  
their mother country, and murdered  
l king.'

ll thee, old man,' said Sir Thomas,  
d make inquiry. I sought the child  
ghbourhood of the Grange, and was  
no such infant had ever been heard  
e night on which Sir Herbert Blount  
ered, and that the old butler was dead.  
nge itself, and the whole domain  
was then and is now in the hands  
ds Commissioners, and, therefore, feel-  
ed no such infant remained within it, I  
that the child perished on that night,

or soon afterwards ; for it was unlikely, although I understood the steward had been seen hovering about, that an infant could have survived in the charge of so unskilful a nurse, and in times so unsettled.'

" 'The domain,' continued the steward, 'was, and is, sure enough, in the hands of those miscreants, whom God will doubtless at his own season utterly confound and destroy. But the ruinous Grange,' and the throat of the old man rattled with a kind of chuckle as he said it, 'I held for its rightful lord and owner, as it was considered by the conscience-stricken cowards, into whose hands the lands have fallen, not safe to risk their precious carcasses in a residence which was wont ever and anon to fly piecemeal into the air, and was also assuredly, they hesitated not to affirm, tenanted by a legion of devils. The only time they ever attempted to take possession, I fired a barrel of gunpowder in the apartment beneath the one which the men they sent had appropriated as a sleeping-room, and, much as I respect every stone in the walls of the Grange, I that night spoiled the wrought ceilings, and brought down

one stack of chimneys in the wing building, which had been till then un-  
d, about their accursed ears. Those  
ped this reception, so intimidated  
loyers with the horrors they pretended  
een, that they have not since found  
ling to undergo a second night's oc-

stewardship is now over,' he conti-  
ing upward; 'laud be to God that  
allowed me to retain my office thus  
ere, Sir Thomas Thornhill, is the  
ir of the Moated Grange; I consign  
our charge. I thought, in bringing  
limbs thus far to your gates, to have  
him into the hands of your father;  
content as it is. For many years  
y date of life I have held death reso-  
ay for this child's sake, but I find  
me at last, and for some days I have  
er in my mind where safely to bestow  
tting resolution into my limbs, I  
ceeded in bringing him here. Sir  
Thornhill, I am about to die,' con-  
e old man, in a deep and sepulchral  
ledge me your sacred word that you

will receive and protect this child till the time comes (and it will be here now soon), when God shall restore this land to happiness, and the boy to his own.'

"The aged man was correct in his prognosis; the spirit that had possessed him (now he saw his darling charge received by the family to whom he thus intrusted him), rapidly failed, and his life seemed in a flickering state, like a burnt-out candle.

"He placed in the hands of Sir Thomas a parchment, on which he had written an account of the transactions from which this story has been taken; and he then asked to be conveyed to bed. The child, who could not understand half of what had taken place, refused to be persuaded that he was about to change his dearly-beloved old attendant for the uncertain kindness of strangers.

"Sir Thomas himself never left them during that night; and before day broke, with the child clasped to his skeleton breast, the faithful steward breathed his last.

O good old man! how well in thee appears  
The constant service of the antique world!

as long before they could persuade the  
ld to leave the body of the only com-  
almost he ever remembered, and who  
d to believe would never wake again.

en at length (during an interval of his  
and grief), the child slept by the  
corpse, and they carefully removed  
d buried it, his distraction was so great  
unable to discover whither it had been  
, as to endanger his life for some  
After a while, however, he consented to  
with the daughter of his new protector,  
mas Thornhill, (a beautiful little girl,  
s own age), and transferred his regards

find him, afterwards, fighting bravely  
ontrose during his splendid campaigns  
North. He afterwards married Miss  
d, and recovering his property, lived to  
ld age, and died at the Grange, leaving  
children behind him."

## CHAPTER VIII.

More matter for a May morning.

SHAKSPERE.

THE strange and eventful story we had heard, greatly interested my fair friends, and furnished us with constant subject of discussion whilst refreshments were served.

We took our repast *al fresco*, under the shade of melancholy boughs, spreading our cloth upon the grass, and cooling our flasks in the stream of a fountain, which played melodiously in a grotto close beside us. In short, I endeavoured to entertain my guests in fitting style. Lady de Clifford and Mistress Allworthy were in high spirits, and although a shade of sadness still remained upon the brow of Miss Villeroy, our united efforts almost succeeded in banishing it. As for myself, I felt free as

the air, and that, perhaps, is one of the best enjoyments we mortals can hope for. A fool of romance, I lived upon a cluster of bright champagne, and a shower of glances of beauty, I rhapsodized in bowy groves and unfrequented glens, like Jacques and Orlando, till my guests thought me a fit subject for Bed-

lurged into the glassy stream, on the bank of which the cousins reclined, and which reflected features so beautiful, I even ventured to versify some stanzas, and, I fear, sung them to my guitar.

I said I, as I preluded upon the instrument, this is indeed true enchantment, ladies. When, deprived of your society, I turn from the dull stream of life,\* I turn from the mirrors which the Claude glass breathes into the scene, to the nakedness of the scene

He trifles not with grace like thine,  
He crouches, conquered by thy gaze,  
Thy lips so loving—so divine,

Pain never preys !

\* Bulwer.



The lustrous eyes, that largely show  
Thy passing feelings' light and shade,  
Now darkly melt—now dazzling glow,  
Each thought betrayed ;

Thy cheek, where morning's rosy light  
Enchanted sleeps on softest snows,  
And bloom eternal o'er its bright  
Perfection glows ;

The triumph of thy loveliness,  
When each full charm asserts its right  
Like stars that crowd in heaven to bless  
The birth of night ;

All prove, if proof were wanting now,  
All tell, if truth alone may tell,  
How beats each heart—how burns each brow.  
Beneath thy spell !

And yet how vain, how more than vain,  
Each thought that madly clings to thee !  
So, beauty breeds too surely pain,  
Love—misery.

And such their fate, whose daring eyes  
Have gazed on what they ne'er forget.  
Yet who can glance at Paradise  
And feel regret ?

Not I ! One glimpse of charms like thine  
Thou fairer far than Fancy's child,  
Would fill my breast with peace divine,  
However wild.



ever racked my heart before,  
lance at thee repose would bring,  
gh after-thoughts (when stilled its roar)  
Might leave a sting.

g that lives till life's last groan,  
g that parts not but with breath.  
ne thy beauty bears alone  
n earlier death !

there my verse, in witness of my  
Mrs. Allworthy, rising and glancing  
leroy. " We are much bounden to  
ur excellent music, Mr. Blount. I  
at you were poet, as well as philo-  
his cool retreat you have chosen for  
so delightful, that it requires an  
ve it. You could not have given us  
reat. I quite agree with the old

a morsel on the greensward rather,  
as you will the cooking—let the fresh  
spring  
beside my napkin.  
son feasts I like not.

ne, I think you said you had or-  
pony phaeton, to shew us some of  
of your park here. We are like the

lawyers in vacation, ladies, we see not how time moves "

As Mrs. Allworthy wished much to view Berrywell Chase, the scene mentioned in the story we had heard, as that of the overthrow of the Cromwellian troopers, it was arranged that Lady de Clifford should drive her to it, whilst I myself escorted Miss Villeroy, on a Shetland pony, in the same direction, and we accordingly took our way along the avenue.

The avenue of Wharnccliffe Grange would in itself deserve a chapter. It consisted of a grove of oaks, each mossed tree of which, seeming to have outlived the eagle ; and the branches meeting over head, threw so deep a shade over the delicious carpet we traversed, that it was dark as twilight.

The reader will readily imagine the feelings I experienced whilst the companion of Miss Villeroy in this sylvan retreat. The deep silence and old world look of the place, the solitude of the scene, together with the excitement, and the champagne I had swallowed, in drinking healths to my fair guests, made it exceedingly difficult for me to refrain from throwing myself at the feet of one who appeared the

of the grove, and pouring out all my everlasting love and admiration in her ear.

The first time I had found myself thus alone, with the fair empress of my heart although she had ordered the attendance of Miss Starch her lady's maid, seated upon the fellow Shetland to the mistress was riding, followed us at a distance, I considered her presence an interruption to our tête-à-tête, and the rooks which cawed over

our business had considerably evaporated; I was living wonderfully under the influence of her beauty. The might, the majesty of her presence, which had at first awed me, now was all eloquent, and I amused Miss Villars with a whole litany of impertinence desecrating love in the golden age, when men were acorns, and the business of life consisted in playing on pipes of corn, and versing in honourable Phillidas.

My companion was greatly diverted with my extravagance in entertaining her, and I was on the point of giving utterance to the feelings of my

heart, when her eye fell upon the diamond ring, which Lady de Clifford had presented to me, after the adventure of the mad dog.

It was evident that Constance, in telling her the story of that action, had concealed so much of it, as pertained to the jewel she had given me.

"Was it customary, in your golden age, Mr. Blount," she said archly, "for the swains to make love to more than one nymph at a time."

There was something of pique, I thought, in the tone of her voice, as she said this.

"This ring, Miss Villeroy," I said, in answering the expression of her eye. "This ring was——"

"My gift," she said interrupting me "to my cousin Constance. I thought she prized it."

"Dear, as her finger," I returned, "doubtless, she did so; but it was given to me under peculiar circumstances. Sweet ornament, that once decked a thing divine. I value it tenfold more, Miss Villeroy, since you say it was yours. O Sylvia, Sylvia," I continued kissing the ring like some stage-struck hero making his *début*

, "unless I be by Silvia in the day,  
no day for me to look upon."

Myer honour then, look upon a poor  
said a voice close at my elbow, "and  
the loan of the price of a pot of half

Willeroy uttered an exclamation of sur-  
the suddenness of the interruption,  
ning my head, I beheld an ill-looking  
essed in the garb of a looker-out or  
an Irishman, who had formerly been  
ploy, but long since dismissed as one  
st incorrigible poachers in the county.  
stepped from beside one of the trees as  
, and followed us unheard, upon the

make you here, Sir," said I, stopping  
onting him, both angry at his inter-  
nd presence in the park at mid-day.

put yourself in a passion, Master  
returned the fellow coolly, "for pas-  
mighty unbecoming thing for the face.  
self I'm in search of, more luck and  
your honour. Times have been bad  
since your father turned me out of

his service, bitter bad luck to him, for doing so."

Miss Villeroy seemed alarmed at the ruffian's manner. She rode a few paces onwards. I felt half inclined to knock the scoundrel down, but seeing that he was half drunk, I restrained my gathering ire.

"If you have business with me," said I, (turning to leave him), "call at the Grange to-morrow. I am engaged at present, as you see."

"Faith then, Master Blount," he said, "it's not myself, that will spoil your sport; but, I've been looking for ye for some time; and, to say truth, what you and I have to speak of had best be talked over in the open air, where there's neither walls to hear, nor roof to shelter us."

The man's manner was singular. That secret fear, which is ever attendant upon the guilty, seemed to warn me, that he had something of importance to communicate.

"What mean ye," said I, growing curious, "and what, in the fiend's name, can I have to talk of, with a scoundrel like yourself?"

both then, it's a scounthrel like meself, will soon tell you that same. Does your honour's glory, remember old Squire Villeroy of that great house, yonder away there beyond the hills. By dad, I thought I'd help your honour a trifle, but mum's the word," he continued, seeing me start at his words, "I myself being concealed in the wood, that same day, you overthrew the old boy. By the same token, I was at the inquest too, and saw that Master Ratcliffe; your honour knows why you told the story as you did. By all means, it's no business of mine; but I saw what happened, and a pretty piece of work you made of it, though you and I are the only ones in the matter."

My communication surprised and confounded me. I could not, indeed, at the moment utter a word in answer. The fellow saw the impression his words had made. He was the son of an unscrupulous and resolute Irishman; his face was swollen, and sodden look-  
ing from the effects of much strong drink and  
good food.

"No business, in short," he continued, turning round, as if he feared interruption,



"and I must speak it here. I'm starving—starving in the open world. If your secret is worth keeping from yonder lady, Master Ratcliffe, it's worth buying. Your keepers have been playing sharp upon me, since that last business of yours, and the children cry for food. I must have money."

For a moment I looked at the man in doubt, as to what I had better do in the matter. I felt astounded, and as if some demon had sprung up in my path to blast me ; and fearing Miss Villeroy might catch some unlucky word of the fellow's discourse, hastily took out a purse, containing a few gold pieces, and some silver, and threw it at his head.

"There's gold," said I, "let that purchase your present silence. Seek me at day-break tomorrow, here on this spot, and I will talk further with you ; meantime, vanish in the name of Heaven, and leave the park."

"More luck, and grace to ye," said the fellow, as he caught and pocketed the purse, "I'll be here at sun-rise, never fear."

The next moment, he was lost in the deep shade of the trees, among which he darted.



no leisure for deliberation on this rencontre. Miss Villeroy, I observed waiting for me a short distance and hurrying after, I quickly overtook

rather alarmed Mr. Blount," said looking back, "at yonder savage looking man. Since my father's cruel death, I have been so frightened, and the sight of that ghastly countenance has brought the event so forcibly to my mind, that I almost thought he was one of the

He appears to have some business with you, do you know him?"

was once employed as a keeper here," and wished to ask some favour of

in a familiar way he spoke to you," she thought I need not marvel at that: every body hereabouts, are fast losing their senses in situations above them. He was a dreadful specimen; I almost thought he was about to attack and murder you at this very spot."

grateful to Miss Villeroy, for the in-

terest she feels in my safety," I returned. "There was, however, not much to be alarmed at in the appearance of so squalid looking and emaciated a ruffian; but you say truly, the peasantry hereabouts, and I suppose it is the same all over England, are much altered in behaviour, even in my remembrance."

"In Ireland," said Miss Villeroy, "where my poor father had an estate in the county of ———, and where he made it a rule to spend at least three months of the year, the peasantry are greatly altered of late years. Formerly, you never met a cottager, but if you glanced him afar off a look of recognition, he immediately returned it, and touched his hat, or had something civil to say in passing; now, however, in some parts of Ireland, it is a chance if you receive civility from your own tenants. I remember," continued Miss Villeroy, "we one day met a man, on whom my father had conferred many benefits. 'More power to you,' he said, as he stopped and accosted us, 'but you've been good to me and mine for many a long year, and it's myself that hopes you'll not take it amiss for the future, if I should fail in

ng you. Your honour's glory won't be  
l, if I don't touch my hat in passing, for  
e to come, will ye now ?'

father was a good deal amused, and  
he'd disrespect him exactly as he  
fit.

men that's exactly it,' he said. 'Your  
knows I'm a catholic; by the same  
myself amongst others have been for-  
to pay any respect to your family; and  
to persist in doing so, notwithstanding  
der, I should perhaps be kilt before  
eeks were over my head.' These brave  
erous islanders, indeed, have most ra-  
len off in their good feeling towards  
this beautiful country, who are of an-  
nily, although, clever creatures as they  
e know so well, how to banter the  
l pride of the rich trader or upstart

y are aware perhaps," said I, "of the  
of their talented countrywoman, Miss  
th, that it takes three generations to  
gentleman."

tly so, and the aristocracy were respected  
ly. Now, however, they are taught to

believe, that extermination of the landed gentry is the only good, and that naught can go well with them, till their employers are either knocked on the head, or made to wear leathern aprons. Such a doctrine I have heard, is oftentimes preached to them in their chapels after mass. 'Tis a pity too, for the sons of Erin are the creatures of impulse—brave, generous and full of talent."

"You seem to be well acquainted," said I, "with Ireland, Miss Villeroy."

"Oh, I love the Irish," said she, "and delight in their country. Almost ever since I can remember, I have mixed much amongst them; my nurse was an Irishwoman, and she used to chaunt me the melancholy songs and ballads of the old time. My father, as I believe, I told you, always spent three months of the year on his estate, in the county of Meath; and our place of residence was a long, low, irregular building. Old as your moated house here, it was situated in a part of the country, perhaps rather too wild looking to be admired by most people, though I myself liked it the better for that. There was a feeling of unsafety which made dwelling there very delight-

our castle having been frequently attacked we always lived with a certain degree of watchfulness when residing at it. The house, during nearly all the time of my residence, was well filled with guests, you may think how merrily we used to spend our time there. The huge fire-places blazed with oak and pine-logs, and the banquet table followed fast, each week while we were there.

It is so amusing to see the discomfort of the English beaux, who did not quite like being pelted by a concourse of savage peasants when they went forth to hunt, that it is not unfrequently the case, stopped almost quietly and unceremoniously of their horses, when they wandered into the country in search of grouse.

There is generally a detachment of some regiment of horse or foot, within a few miles of every town in Ireland; and, it is pleasant to observe the officers (thus isolated), some of them. The last time we were there, I think there was a detachment of a High-land regiment, I forget now what was its num-

ber; but, the two officers who were with it, were two strange animals. One was a ferocious, gaunt looking man with a Jewish cast of countenance, and a wild and insane eye, and so tall and thin, that like Justice Shallow, he looked the very genius of famine, and when fully equipped in his blue frock, which it was his pleasure to wear as long as a morning gown, with the red sash tied round his hips instead of his waist, you might have thought it was old Isaac of York put into regimentals. He was very mad in look, very taciturn in speech, and very ungainly in manner. The other his lieutenant was also a curiosity, and although the Jew was a strict disciplinarian and dreadful martinet, he was perhaps one of the worst officers in the service, and was completely managed and outmanœuvred by his subaltern, who by his tact and management repaired the errors and faults of his commanding officer, and kept the detachment from a state of mutiny.

“The captain, who had evidently either never mixed in good society, or if he had, never had profited by it, was rude and overbearing in manner and pedantic in conversation; and as



to maintain his presumption with the bullet as to offer the affront. The lieutenant on the contrary, was a remarkably quiet man with a proper feeling of what was right and proper, and a wholesome fear of being injured inherent in his nature, which caused him at first to be overlooked in company, till his worth and cleverness by some accident were apparent.

The captain came out immediately on the introduction; he had something rude to say to him. The lieutenant was gentle and retiring, not making a new acquaintance, until he met some of the 'contumely, which patient of the unworthy takes,' and then his nature seemed changed, and he assumed a position which few could withstand.

It was, indeed, amusing whilst these specimens of soldiership were quartered in Castle, to observe them. The captain, when contradicted in opinion or thwarted, would become a madman, frequently getting into a dispute with some of our Irish gentry over their conduct which threatened hostile proceedings. On every occasion, a word or glance of the eye of his quiet subaltern, would reduce him to

tranquillity and propriety in a moment ; a single word coming between him and his wrath, like a sunbeam on a sullen sea. Indeed, I had very many opportunities of observing the style in which that youth managed two very difficult matters, in a detachment so commanded : namely his company of men, and their commanding officer.

"Poor fellow," said Miss Villeroy, with a sigh, "he was one of those persons, never fortunate in life. His virtues stood him but as enemies ; and with only his cloak and sword, and gentle blood to recommend him, his talents, which would have fitted him for the command of an army, were overlooked and himself neglected."

Whilst we thus conversed, and just as we were thinking it about time to retrace our steps towards the Grange, the big round rain drops, which had for some little time pattered amongst the foliage, began to descend in a heavy shower, and the distant roar of heaven's artillery, proclaimed the approach of a thunder-storm.

Near this part of the grounds there had formerly been, as was evident from the



marks of its extensive foundation, in bye gone days some building of considerable strength and importance ; but of which we had no record in the family. All that now remained of it, was a deep well of somewhat curious appearance. It was covered by a green mound, so that a stranger might have trodden, or walked over it without discovering that such a cavity was beneath his feet ; unless he happened to observe the small aperture, which opening into it on one side, conducted him, by a ruinous flight of steps, down into the interior of the little hillock. Tradition of the neighbourhood gave the structure a very ancient date, some folks affirming it to have been dug there for the use of, and by the Roman legions.

Its situation in this lonely spot, amidst the surrounding massive foliage of the old wood, and only approachable through the thick under-wood by a narrow sheep track, was singularly romantic. It was a favourite haunt of the peasantry of the village near ; and, indeed, considered a sacred spot by the whole country round, from the circumstance of Mary Queen of Scots having once stopped in passing, as she was

being conveyed a prisoner to Chatsworth, and descending to rest in the cool well-house, whilst the troopers, who formed her guard, drew up the bucket, that she might be refreshed by its icy waters.

There was also another source of interest to the common and popular herd, who generally delight in deeds of horror, arising from the circumstance of a most diabolical murder having been perpetrated in its vicinity. A forester had been waylaid near this spot, by some deer stealers, with whom he had previously been at feud, and they having tied him neck and heels, threw him into the well. From that time, which was during the reign of George the First, it took the name of the old lady in whose employ, the forester had lived, and ever afterwards had gone by the name of Lady Dacre's well.

Having in our ramble reached the vicinity of this structure, and the dark clouds in the distance beginning now to send forth their rattling report, which like the file fire of the skirmishers proclaims the heavy ordnance at hand; the rain also now coming down with increasing

proposed (ere the bursting of the clouds, which as Trinculo says, chuse but fall by pailsfull) to reach the Lady Dacre's well.

ingly, taking Miss Villeroy's Shetland ne bridle, whilst the brewing storm he wind, I quickly led her through bush, towards its shelter, and tying to the withered branches of an aged a grew across the entrance, we d entered.

lleroy was greatly pleased with the si- l appearance of this curious place; but much persuasion, ere we could coax into its shelter. She was pleased to me of these little airs and graces over-indulgent young lady, which Honor is described by Fielding to have in contrast to the exquisite and beautiful Western. She declined taking e said, in so dismal looking a pit. burst of thunder directly over head wever, more persuasive, than the dul- f her mistress's voice, and she con- length, to descend a step or two nterior; but the echo she there

heard from the depths of the old well, as quickly scared her back again ; we therefore, had to explore the interior of the mound by ourselves. The only light, that which was partially afforded from the narrow entrance, streamed from a sort of arrow slit in the roof on the opposite side, and both together, only in a slight degree, illuminated the cavern.

The well being handy for the residents of the adjoining hamlet, had always been kept in repair ; but the labour of drawing up water in the ponderous iron bucket was so great, requiring two strong men in the effort, that it was very rarely used. The massive iron chain, however, still remained attached to the windlass and the bucket rested upon the iron grating which covered the opening, whilst two ponderous iron handles of the multiplying wheel, almost touched the walls on either side.

Miss Villeroy after amusing herself by listening to the echoes sent forth from the depths below, stooped under the iron handles of the wheel, and made her way round to explore the other side of this singular looking building.

The storm meanwhile had been visibly in-

and at this moment became extremely dark, and the sky suddenly growing more overcast, the interior of the well now became dark as night. Miss Villeroy was alarmed, and I followed her, to lend my assistance, in her steps to the entrance of the well.

At this moment a vivid flash of lightning struck through the aperture, lighting up the interior as if it had suddenly burst into light, and a clap of thunder immediately followed, the mound was shaken to its foundation. A portion of the brick work of the roof directly over the bucket instantly gave way, falling upon the grating, carrying the whole down into the well.

The tower trembled as if from the shock of an earthquake; and the brickwork, upon which the bucket seemed about to give way beneath it, whilst the most awful clatter sounded in the startled ears, from the whirl of the machine, the uncoiling of the chain, and the rattling sound of the descending bucket.

Miss Villeroy, shrieking with affright, would have been instantly killed in her attempt at

gaining the flight of steps, but, luckily I saw her intention, and seizing her in my arms detained her.

The situation we were in, was certainly far from pleasant, though the danger was in reality not so great as from the mixture of horrible sounds it appeared. The moment the bucket reached the bottom, we might escape, provided I could keep my affrighted companion quiet during its descent amidst such a din, where indeed one felt inclined like "The king's son Ferdinand, with hair up-starting," to have cried, "Hell is empty and all the devils here." I however, continued to hold Miss Villeroy firmly, and detained her, till the ponderous bucket reached the waters; and silence once more reigning within the building we gained the flight of steps, and once more stood in safety beside the old mossed tree, which grew athwart the entrance. Here we found the attendant nymph nearly dead with terror and dismay.

Thus finished the adventure of Lady Dacre's well. I bore my companion up the dilapidated steps, so frightened and confounded with the

ness and strange manner in which all had  
ed, that she appeared for the moment  
ewildered, and my attention and assist-  
as further requisite in order to reassure  
over her sufficiently, to proceed home-

## CHAPTER IX.

Comes in my father,  
And like the tyrannous breathing of the north,  
Shakes all our buds from blowing.

A father cruel and a step-dame false.

SHAKESPEARE.

By the several chances, I have related, did I become the rescuer of the two young ladies, at different times, from situations of imminent peril. Certain it is, that I sought not such singular fortune ; but like Malvolio's anticipated greatness it was thrust upon me by time and the hour. Nay, it has been urged against me, by members of their family, that I played a villain's part in inveigling the affections of the two cousins at the same time:—so said the world also, and what the world is determined to assert, 'tis vain to combat.



liserable world, whose nature, I am per-  
is base, and whose applause ought  
tently to be valueless, what philosopher  
care for thy frown or smile, when he  
red thee for a moment, with thy hollow  
displayed !

en I look back upon the retirement in  
I passed the earlier part of my existence,  
nclined to think the way of life my father  
l me to follow, was the most likely to  
ce to happiness and content. Alas ! as  
andsome Spaniard sang to his guitar in  
wer of Segovia, "a year of pleasure passes  
fleeting breeze," but a moment of misfor-  
seems an age of pain.

was whilst Miss Villeroy and myself were  
ese somewhat peculiar circumstances, that  
erhaps rather prematurely confessed our  
gs towards each other. In fine, I loved,  
was beloved again ; and, like Mazeppa,  
ld have given the world, to have but  
her mine" "in the full view of earth  
eaven." But Miss Villeroy, with all her  
ence and beauty, had one fault, and that  
"shook all our buds from blowing."

Timid, and fearful of the control of her somewhat imperious relatives, she had no will of her own, sacrificing all her best feelings to their overbearing and caprice. She was irresolute to a degree, and beautiful as the gentle Desdemona, (but unlike her in spirit), would have sacrificed herself to the sooty guardage of a hideous Moor, (not from the incomprehensible feelings of her own breast in his favour), but at the bidding of those who she considered in authority over her.

It was therefore when half supporting her, as I proceeded homewards by her side, and had poured forth all my passion, and received her confession in return, sealing my vows of everlasting love upon her lips, that she appeared suddenly to repent the confession I had wrung from her, and would almost have fled, as though she had been guilty of some fearful crime.

However, having once broken the ice, and found myself blessed with some return, I was not easily to be driven from my hopes. I had heard from those lips the sweet confession, and those eyes, the break of day, (lights which,

ight mislead the morn), had softly  
the tale, and almost in the same  
had I again heard the ill-omened  
ich syllabled her engagement to the  
l cousin she was bound to, by her  
r's wish.

ore to press, therefore, at that time,  
than a transient smile, in return for  
votion; whilst to myself I swore, to  
spite of fate, though hell itself should  
swallow her from my arms. Mean-  
thunder-clouds had rolled onwards,  
un shone out brightly as we wended  
back to the Grange, the heavy rain-  
ttering like diamonds amongst the  
liage we were under.

gth, we neared the frowning battle-  
the old building, and crossing the  
e, passed under the gate-house, and  
e court-yard. Here a new and some-  
ge scene awaited us, in shape of the  
apparition of three travelling car-  
ch drawn by four posters, recking  
recent speed at which they had jour-  
servants were also busily engaged in

unlading boxes and packages from within, and unstrapping imperials from without these vehicles, whilst postillions, dismounted from their horses, stood splashed and bespattered from head to heel.

This was a sight I had never before beheld within "the roundure of our old faced walls," and it not a little puzzled me to account for. Who could thus be taking possession, I wondered, of our heretofore almost monastic and secluded dwelling. For the moment, I almost forgot the fair companion who leant upon my arm. A sort of dread crept over me, a presentiment of evil to come, as I stopped to gaze upon this apparition.

Miss Villeroy, however, recalled her presence to my remembrance, and accounted for the unwonted sight of this party at the same moment.

"This must surely be your father," she said, "Mr. Blount, who has arrived unexpectedly from London."

"I cannot suppose it," said I, betraying the annoyance her suggestion had caused, by my countenance and tone of voice. "I cannot

t, since my father would scarcely  
h such a cavalcade as I see before

e must surely be some mistake in  
er then," she returned. "Let us  
, and inquire the meaning of your  
being taken thus by storm."

ant, however, hastening to meet us,  
labour.

father has arrived, Mr. Ratcliffe," said  
ompanied by a party of strangers,  
ve been directed to seek and bring  
im immediately. He awaits you in  
Sir."

g the attendance of the old house-  
order to procure Miss Villeroy any  
apparel she might require after her  
through the rain, I hastened into the  
ng-room, where I had ascertained from  
ts, Lady Constance and Mrs. All-  
ere awaiting our return.

l them there accordingly, in company  
new arrivals, whom I had scarcely  
ake a rapid glance of, ere the servant  
ught me in order to request my im-  
attendance upon my impatient sire.

Attempting, therefore, a hasty apology to Mrs. Allworthy for having so long been detained, I prepared to seek my honoured parent, promising to return to them in a few minutes.

"Heed us not," said Lady de Clifford, "our carriage is ordered. Adieu, we shall be away before you return from your father, on whose privacy, I fear, we have unworthily intruded."

There was a something of hauteur in Lady de Clifford's manner as she said this, which was not natural to her; and I fancied she had perhaps either experienced some slight from the new-comers during my absence, or that perhaps their very companionship was disagreeable to her. However, I entreated of her to await my return, and taking a hurried farewell, in case she should not do so, withdrew.

Entering the library, I found my father seated in an easy chair, which he seemed to occupy most uncomfortably and impatiently. The angry spot was upon his brow too, and he looked pallid and unwell. There were also various alterations in his dress and countenance, which made his appearance strange to me. He had left his home in the costume of a



gentleman, somewhat of the old school. His coat, which used to be rather of the old style, and his hair, always neatly combed backwards from the face and forehead, ending behind in a long pigtail, were both now altered.

He wore a well-fitted and padded frock-coat upon his body; and the long hair and neatly-tied pigtail had given place to a patent spring wig, luxuriant in curl, as jet in colour; his whiskers, too, were allowed to grow, and having been put under the discipline of some deep and searching razor, had a burnt up and somewhat fiery

appearance. When, however, he was so utterly changed in appearance, that, had I not beheld him thus under his own roof, expecting so to find him, I scarcely have recognized him for my old person. We were always an odd couple, son and sire, as the world goes, and had none of the usual style between us in our every-day intercourse. We generally parted without greeting; and when, after my absence from home I returned, we fell into our ordinary way of life

without comment upon each other's employments. My father always disliked having his health inquired about. Even if he had been seriously unwell, such a question would be sure to make him turn abruptly off with a pshaw and a grunt; and he never by any chance asked such a question of another. His manners, somewhat stern at all times had latterly grown more so. He appeared just now, indeed, in downright ill-humour with himself, and seemed inclined to quarrel with those about him.

"How is this, Sir," he commenced, as soon as I entered, "I return to my home here, which I supposed would have remained, during my absence, secluded as before I left it, and I find its privacy invaded, and its apartments filled with strangers. Who and what are these visitors whom I encountered on my arrival?"

"They are the residents of Marston Hall, Sir," I said. "Lady Constance de Clifford and her relation, Mrs. Alworthy."

"And pray, Sir," returned he, sharply, "to what circumstance am I indebted for the honour of a visit from Lady Constance de Clifford and Mistress Allworthy, her relation; and why



troubled with their company just at  
ular time? Four days back," he  
rising from his seat, and walking  
now, as if he wished to conceal the  
of his countenance from my steady  
our days ago, I wrote you word  
uld return this day, desiring to have  
prepared for the visitors accompa-  
and mentioning in my letter, also,  
extremely unwell. At all times,  
nely unpleasant to me to be an-  
strangers: at this time, it is both  
and inconvenient to have an ill-  
palmed upon me. What expla-  
," continued he, turning sharply  
ve you to offer for this strange con-

not received a letter from you, Sir,"  
"for at least a whole month. "I  
ing of your movements, and was  
are of your intended return, or  
been at home to receive you."

"said my father, stepping from  
y, glancing down upon the table,  
up a heap of unopened letters and

papers, which had, for the last few days, accumulated and been neglected.

"Here, indeed, is my letter," said he, "and unopened, as I live. This is something extraordinary, young man, to say the least of it. Scarcely have you attended to a single thing I required of you during my absence. Go, Sir, dismiss these new friends of yours, and return hither when you have done so."

During this interview, I had felt no slight anxiety to learn something about the strangers he had brought with him; but as he forbore speaking on the subject, I felt diffident of making inquiry about them.

The explanation, however, came somewhat sooner than I thought for. Calling to me to return, just as I was about to leave the apartment, he pointed to the unopened letter before him. "Stay, Sir," said he, "perhaps you had better take my letter with you, and peruse it before you return. It contains matters which I would rather not have to recur to. Amongst other things, and which the sooner you learn the better, since the lady is in this house, my letter would have in-

, had you taken the trouble of  
that having thought proper to  
a, some part of my wife's family  
panied her home."

this communication in a hesitating  
d manner: something ashamed, he  
having to utter what, perhaps, he  
reconcile as a very wise step he  
in his old age. His eye fell, as I  
surprise I felt. Ordinarily, he  
down a lion, which was proof to  
this instance he was conscious he  
ed rightly. After a few moments'  
sh both felt rather awkwardly, I  
o utter some words of congratu-  
unlooked-for an event. Again he  
tly, and turning off, walked to the  
nd throwing it open, looked out  
boat beneath.

myself, I quitted the presence as  
as though I feared the blind mole  
heard my footfall, not a little  
and bewildered with this new and  
event. It was now a relief to me  
nd my visitors had departed, and be-  
at the acquaintance of my so recently

and unexpectedly found relatives, I betook myself to my own apartment in order to peruse the epistle which, in the excitement and delight of daily intercourse with the residents of the neighbouring hall, I had so inopportunately neglected.

The letter contained much that was of consequence to me to know, but which at that time I cared little about; for when does a youth setting out in life think much of loss of fortune? It explained amongst other things the intricacies and difficulties of a suit in chancery, and how it was likely to effect my fortunes in after-life. From it I also learned that having put implicit faith in a scoundrel attorney, entrusting all his money matters to his guidance. (instead of attending to matters of business himself), my father, notwithstanding the princely fortune he had hitherto enjoyed, was now in a most unpleasant situation.

All these things were fully dilated on, as also the circumstance of his having thought proper to marry the daughter of the new solicitor he had employed, who had he said in the most praiseworthy manner given up his whole time and energies to his case. With

the money transactions, few men cared to know so little of business of the world. "The worst thou canst report of me," I said, as I folded up and returned the epistle; "and if, my dearest father, by the connexion you have increased your happiness, I shall not be made a jot discontent, come what will." It struck me from his appearance, although I ventured to make inquiry about his situation, he must have had a fit of some kind, though I rather hoped the change I saw was the consequence of his having perhaps at the wish of his bride), and youthful style of dress, which added at least ten years to his ap-

I brought my new relatives, who were seated at a hastily furnished repast, in lieu of the dinner I had omitted to provide. The conversation of the party by no means gave me a more favourable opinion of them, than the one I had formed.

My mother-in-law was a pretty looking woman, about five and twenty years of age, and of a dark in complexion, with a dissatis-

fied expression, and a Jewish cast of countenance. In figure she was short, and rather *embonpoint*. She was accompanied by her father and mother, who had met the newly married pair at Buxton; with them also had come their son, and the remaining unmarried daughter. There, indeed, needed but a glance at the whole party to shew me that they were of Jewish extraction. The son in particular, was a tall, dark-looking, awkward figured, and swollen featured youth: so truly Jewish in feature, mien, and accent, that you may observe his *fac-simile* vending the *raal* St. Michael's in any street of the metropolis, any day of the year in which oranges are in good repute.

He was gorgeously apparelled, and like all Israelitish dandies, sported an elaborately figured velvet waistcoat, and was half weighed down with the weight of metal, of the ornamental chains around his neck.

In conversation he appeared determined upon striking an impression, and out Heroded Herod in the feats he had himself performed; his acquaintance, he would fain persuade his hearers, were the associates of royalty, and at the same

time he was abashed evidently by the novelty of the capacious and venerable apartment in which he was now sitting, and the liveried attendance by whom his wants were ministered to.

The father was a sly looking man, who veiled his evil disposition, and wreathed his countenance in smiles and affability ; but if you watched him narrowly you might see the scoundrel every now and then peeping out. He hated a Christian with a hate as deadly as old Shylock destested Antonio with ; but he loved money, more than he could hate anything. Nathan Ben Levison was, indeed, a Jew who would "eat with you, drink with you, and pray with you, as well as buy with you, sell with you, and so following," where he could, by so doing, line his pockets with the gold of the hated Christian. In short he was an unscrupulous Israelite : a grasping, designing, and crafty companion, whose disposition I thought I could discover before he had been resident a week beneath our roof.

Myself he looked upon on our first acquaintance as a good easy youth, who, amusing himself in his poetical imaginations, was unfitted for the business of life.



His wife was not worthy of much observation, being but a common-place and vulgar specimen of her class ; and, large as an elephant, had to all appearance been promoted from the kitchen to the head of the attorney's table.

The unmarried daughter was a pretty looking Jessica, of about seventeen years of age. Unlike her relatives, she seemed retiring in manners and amiable in disposition. In another part of my history, I shall have to speak further of this young lady, as I became mixed up with her in a scene of fearful interest. At the present time, although she made several attempts to recommend herself to my notice and become on terms of friendship with me, I repelled her courtesy with disdain, and treated her with the same hauteur that I displayed towards the other members of her family.

Such then were the strangers who had accompanied my father to the Grange, and were for the future to be its inmates. Yes, upon such an unpromising looking party did the bearded countenances of my ancestors look down from their frames, I may almost affirm, with a scowl of contempt, whilst at the same moment, the evil eye of the rapacious Jew,



glanced upon their features, as he contemplated the period at which he should be enabled, by the web he was weaving around their living descendants, to have them disposed of by the hammer of the auctioneer, with as little remorse as Charles Surface displayed, in knocking down his sapient progenitors.

## CHAPTER X.

O my sweet master——

Why, what make you here ?

Why are you virtuous ?

And wherefore are you gentle, strong and valiant ?

Know you not, master, to some kind of men

Their graces serve them but as enemies ?

No more do yours. Your virtues, gentle master,

Are sanctified and holy traitors to you.

O, what a world is this, when what is comely

Envenoms him that bears it!

SHAKESPEARE.

It will be unnecessary for me to dilate upon the trifles which began, and the consummate art used by these designing people in order to promote a serious quarrel between my father and myself, and the deadly and mortal hatred which consequently sprang up between us.

ably, indeed, under any circumstances, friends; even had we not each other's interest. They were, as fire to water, and consequently, at the first moment of their arrival, I endeavored to avoid their society, by being absent from my home, as I could not venture upon, without giving notice to my father. He was now, indeed, busied and employed, arranging matters with the old Jew attorney, and getting his involved affairs into better train, so that he might not depart with the estate.

I could understand, for I was not permitted to participate in their councils, it had been said by old Levison, that my father had departed for the continent with his bride, till in some measure arranged matters. The old gentleman clung tenaciously to his ancestors, and the bare idea of the estate was torture to him. He was desirous of putting off that evil day as he possibly could. Meanwhile, my father made frequent journeys to

and from the Grange, in order to manage the matters of business connected with his office in town, leaving his wife and family still residents with us.

The young dandy, who had not been brought up to any profession, but who was doubtless meant to inherit the ill-gotten wealth which had been scraped together by the father, and was to be the founder of the future greatness of the family, now strutted about the Grange, and lorded it over the establishment as if he had been its whole and sole proprietor. He had the art to make himself exceedingly useful and necessary to my father, writing his letters, reading to him in his study, and indeed performing all those little services which I myself was too proud, in his present mood, to offer him.

Wharncliffe Grange meanwhile, had become a good deal changed in one short month after their arrival. My mother-in-law having dismissed a number of our old domestics, who had been taught to consider themselves as almost a part of the family, had substituted one or two of her own creatures in their stead.

establishment was now much curtailed, part of the house shut up. Even to appease the housekeeper, my father consented as to allow his shrewish wife a room where she had so long reigned paramount, over the inferior

Indeed, impossible to describe the appearance of the Grange, both within and without its walls. It is true the altered circumstances of the owner admitted and required improvement and change; but I could not help thinking that these destructions were for a thing which, (time honoured and venerable) the basest souls had no comprehen-

the venerable and lordly avenue, led far away into the more sylvan park, was sometime afterwards, "delved to the branch and bole," "delved to the root and cumbered the mossy carpet of the forest had overshadowed. It may be asked, where was my father's sacrilegious act could be perpetrated in his very eye!—Alas, there was

as much change in him, as in his possessions.

I had observed at first, and a short time fully developed the truth of my suspicions, that he had the appearance of one who had suffered from a paralytic stroke. It was even so, and this fit having seized him whilst he was in the house of, and transacting business with, the old Jew attorney, he had overwhelmed him with attentions, during his partial recovery, managed his matters of business, so as to give him little or no trouble during this illness, and taking most especial care not to allow me to be made acquainted with that, or other circumstances appertaining, had inveighed him into a marriage with his daughter. It will then be easily conceived that the old gentleman, his mind warped, and his intellects at the period much impaired, wayward and tetchy too, was easily worked upon and managed by these designing people.

Myself, indeed, they had now completely ousted from his good graces; the young cub in the cloth of gold waistcoat was all in all, and I but a powerless cipher.

ing, therefore, one evening as I  
rd, a party of labourers dealing  
g blows in our avenue, and top-  
ose "unwedgeable and gnarled  
had stood the test of Heaven's  
nturies, and still remained fling-  
d arms across the path beneath,  
o intercept the rays of the setting  
the spurs into my horse's sides,  
e workmen desist from their em-  
a voice of thunder, demanded by  
they were committing such a bar-

s of England, in these reformed and  
es, have almost forgotten their an-  
of love for the place of their  
care little for the beautiful and  
ther have they now that love and  
hich some half a century back,  
ards the families on whose estates  
ore them had, perhaps, for years  
and been protected and cared  
ngry for knowledge, grovelling in  
e sold their contentment for the  
and are in most instances to be

classed among those base born peasants, who cry long life to the conqueror.

These fellows then, who had been bred, born, and fostered on our estate, and whose relations had some of them accompanied and served in my father's troop when he first joined his regiment in America, leaning upon their weapons, and eying me askance, as that facetious delver who boasted of building stronger houses than the mason, the shipwright and the carpenter's art, could furnish, glanced a look upon me. They at first made no reply to my demand, and some two or three of them, after a sulky scowl, were so unmannerly as to spit upon their hard hands, and strike their hatchets deep into the nearest trunk they had been operating upon, before I came up.

I shall doubtless be blamed, for in this as well perhaps as in many other instances, allowing that violence of temper which has been my bane here again to get the mastery of me, I spurred my horse with such fury at these men, that I dispersed them, for the moment, like so much chaff before the tempest. Nay, I am sorry to say that I completely overthrew one



horse's shoulder, and trampling  
it, lacerated his leg from knee to  
was a fault, and which a moment's  
old have shewn me was both cruel  
It was, however, perhaps, as well  
his ebullition of temper seized me  
as I firmly believe had I ridden  
having learned that this vile deed  
acted, in consequence of an order  
son, the attorney general of our  
supposing it had been given  
ther's confinement to the house  
his sanction, I should have caned  
so much as informing him why  
was favoured by such application.  
these bursts of passion generally  
n and regret following them fast.  
fore, the prostrated labourer, who  
g himself up, and seating himself  
the fallen trunks at hand, con-  
wl and hug his lacerated skin,  
rades gathering round me began  
weapons, as though they meant  
n me and my horse, the re-  
thing merited at their hands. I

became sobered as it were in an instant. Heeding not, however, their threatening looks and menaces, I waved my hand to command silence, and once more requested to be informed by whose directions they were making a clearance, top, lop, bark and trunk, amongst the timber of our respected grove.

If I had wanted any additional proof that my popularity was on the wane amongst the people around our domain, I should have found it now. My new relatives professed the most radical principles, and Old Levison and his son had been already making themselves popular amongst the cottagers on the estate, by preaching up the doctrine of a universal smash, a fair division of spoil, another golden age, and liberty and equality throughout the land—no church—no king—no laws—no army—no nothing. The Blounts, on the contrary, had always been most uncompromising and unflinching Tories, and as the Whig party had just come into power, our principles alone began to render us unpopular.

Accordingly, the labourers having gathered round my steed, by their threatening looks,

ned to make me some return  
ent I had favoured their comrade

our orders," cried one of them,  
my horse's rein, "from those who  
in obeying, without asking your  
matter."

another surly looking ruffian,  
yed now by him, who if report  
s master of the place altogether—  
you."

re yourself out of this, without  
interfering with us," said a third;  
if I doant fetch thee out of thy  
stroke of my hatchet. Who the  
I'd like to know?"

ck, Master Roughhead," said I,  
more wroth, "stand back, I say.  
old upon my horse's rein, and  
e of yours, lest I bury the iron  
my hunting-whip in your brain.  
ruly—for I am in no mood to  
h—by whose direction are you  
venue? Methinks, I have some  
ask the question."

"Ask it then somewhere else," said the first fellow, drawing back and turning off; "we have our orders I suppose, from those who have a right to give them."

"By what right, since you come to the rights of the matter," cried the man, whose leg I had wounded, "do you come here galloping over our bodies. I wonder who is to maintain me for the next six months, whilst I am unable to work? Not you, I'll be sworn."

"Knock him off his rocking-horse," said another, "that'll teach him better manners for the future."

In short, growing more irate at the impertinence of these ruffians we quickly came to blows, and a scene ensued, which I willingly spare the description of. Being mounted, I had the advantage, and pitching upon the most forward of the fellows. I gave him a severe lesson on the spot, and succeeded in driving his companions out of the avenue before me. When I returned to the spot where the wounded man still continued seated upon the trunk of one of the fallen oaks, I again demanded, after giving him five pounds to salve the hurt he had re-

ceived, by whose sanction the devastation, I beheld had been undertaken.

"Our orders were from Squire Levison," said the fellow doggedly, "who himself was here, and directing the work, not half an hour ago. See," he added, pointing his finger down the grove, "there's the young'un standing there now. Best pitch into him, since you don't like what's done, instead of galloping about over our limbs."

I turned my head as the fellow pointed, and saw the young cub sneak hastily off, on seeing that he was discovered, from under the dark shadow of the tree, whence he had witnessed the whole of this transaction.

"No!" said the labourer, raising painfully, and endeavouring to hobble after his comrades, "you don't choose to meddle there I see. 'Cause he's a gentleman, I 'spose, he's not to be ridden over."

Muttering some further savage threat, as he gathered up his tools, he limped away, turned off from the avenue, and vanished from a scene, which indeed he added little to to the beauty of by his presence, and soon af-

terwards made "desolation where he found such plenty."

Having thus fairly routed these worthy specimens, I rode slowly homewards, pondering deeply upon what had just transpired. Can it be possible, I thought, that amongst the various alterations and spoliation, I had observed since these wretches had become his main advisers, and managers, my father has consented to destroy the avenue in front of his dwelling, reckoned as it is one of the finest and oldest specimens in the county! If so, what desecration may we not expect here! If so, "Then farewell, thou loveliest spot of earth." "Farewell, Ionia," as the Assyrian says, "My own, my father's land, farewell, I'll owe thee nothing, not even a grave."

I could not, however, think such measures were by his sanction; but rather, that the attorney having been desired, in one of their conferences to fell timber sufficient to raise immediate funds, in the malignity of his heart had taken the opportunity of making an attempt to destroy the avenue. Many of his operations had been marked by an equal want of sense, taste,

eling, but which I had found it  
and hinder.

around the Grange, for instance,  
the last few days, been converted  
ch, the waters having been un-  
suffered to empty themselves into  
of water situated amongst the  
ar of the building.

estered pools were curious, and  
k on, being clustered together and  
hs amongst them. Overgrown  
en too by the rushes and reeds,  
n allowed for years to choke them  
well filled with carp and other  
ants, and time out of mind had  
by the name of the Abbot's fish  
tion indeed, and the remains of  
n of the Old Monastery upon  
nge was built, made it more than  
they had been dug there in olden  
purpose of furnishing forth the  
successive abbots of the estab-  
their holy brotherhood.

however, as it may, the pike, and  
s that had sojourned pleasantly,

and flapped and splashed in the waters of our moat, were now as many as young Master Moses had not secured in a net, (and for whose amusement I believe the alteration was chiefly got up), sent to pay a visit to their catholic neighbours, and get sufficing absolution in the Abbot's fish-ponds.

All this my sire was taught to believe had been done in very reverend care of his health, as the exhalations of the stagnant waters were pronounced extremely hurtful to his constitution.

Our old pleasure-grounds and gardens too, once so unique in style, with their dark walks, leafy screens, terraces and statues, were now being altered and modernized to meet the taste of their new mistress; and the prostrate figure of Diana lay beside the antlered Actæon, and the fragments of his hounds; whilst, many an attendant nymph, buxom and fresh looking as an April morn, and with the proportions of a porter, fully accoutred too, "with bended bow and quiver full of arrows," were prostrated amidst the grubbed up yews, by which they had before stood concealed and half hidden by river gods, and satyrs, and fauns, too, were overthrown



and borne away. Apollo no longer haunted his grot, and the cave where babbling Echo so lately lied, now untenanted and half demolished, was about to be converted into a citizenish looking summer-house. The Muses' seat, "was now their grave," and in the crystal waters surrounding the temple they had adorned, and where they were formerly reflected from, lay their veritable leaden forms.

Workmen were meanwhile employed in dislodging their pedestals, collecting and carrying off their various amputated limbs and bodies, and bearing them in vulgar wheelbarrows, out of their sometime paradise. Altogether these new comers promised a total reformation and alteration in our dwelling and domain; and considering what they had in so short a time effected, I had every reason to believe that I should some day return home and take it for the abode of another person.

Whilst deeply grieving over these alterations and improvements, for every one of their barbarities had already, as Sancho says, hit me in the teeth, and were to a youth of my disposition like so many sharp injuries inflicted upon

my person, I rode into the stable-yard, where also a change awaited me; and the stalls so lately filled with our cavalry, were now as empty and tenantless as Echo's cave.

## CHAPTER XI.

my life, the day grows wondrous hot.  
A dry devil hovers in the sky,  
And sows down mischief.

SHAKESPEARE.

My father and myself having been on the ill-  
lucky voyage I have mentioned, we had not met for  
some time. I had, indeed, felt it awkward to  
intrude upon his privacy, as he now seldom left  
the apartments he had appropriated to himself,  
and consequently I saw but little of him except  
when he seemed to meet, by accident, on the stairs  
or passages of the house. Upon these oc-  
casions, in consequence of these cogging slaves  
who so puddled his clear spirit, and slandered  
him, he always passed frowning by without ques-  
tion or comment.

At length, however, I was now resolved to meet him  
face to face, and hear from his own mouth

whether he was really aware of the extent of the destruction going on, and above all if he had indeed given his sanction to the condemnation of the avenue.

To ask an interview, I considered, would have only met with a refusal, remembering as I did that the last time I had sought and held conference with him upon the subject, our debate had been so violent, that I was told I should not again be allowed to enter his apartments. I therefore, somewhat unwisely perhaps, walked into the withdrawing room, in which he was sitting, amongst his new connexions, without so much as asking permission.

The whole party were rather taken aback by my sudden appearance. The tea equipage was upon the table, and my mother-in-law presiding over it. My father, seated in his easy-chair meantime, was listening to the description of my sudden onslaught, and consequent dispersion of the workmen in the avenue, related with no slight exaggeration of circumstances by the youth in the gilded waistcoat who I found had hurried home before me, with an account of this new outbreak. There is generally an

in the, previously noisy conversation of the hero of the tale, suddenly and joins the throng, and an attempt upon something so unjointed and that the visitor cannot easily detect, "that his Lordship was the air mouths." Thus it happened, tale-bearer and commentators, and looking confounded, suddenly into various silly questions, no one answering, what the demanded. My father alone sincerely regarding me, rose from good full before the ample fire-

"I told you, Sir," said he, inter- I was about to speak, "that after behaviour, when last in this the favour of your again coming place, till you had offered proper my friends here and myself, for you then thought proper to in-

"I am very sorry," I said, "for having offended you."

"Sir," he continued, "that you are

determined in every way in your power to annoy myself and family; and this very evening, I am told you have countermanded my orders, assaulted, and wounded my people, and used the grossest language towards myself."

"And your informant," I said, pointing to the youngster, who had placed himself beside him, "is the young gentleman on your right hand."

"You have not dared to seek me here," he returned, "ill as I now am, in order to repeat your former violence, and destroy the comfort of my apartment, have you?"

"I am merely here," I said, "to inform you of one circumstance, and inquire if such transaction has been commenced by your orders. When you have answered that question, I will instantly relieve you of my presence. Is it your intention, and have you really given orders to your people to fell the avenue in front of your house?"

"When, Sir," he replied, "I know of any right my own son has to question me, I shall then take into consideration the propriety of answering him."

"It is enough," I said; "the circumstance

my question, without betraying  
expected, is answer sufficient.  
you, but before I do so, I take  
of saying, that your behaviour  
utterly has been totally wanting  
feeling I have hitherto enjoyed,  
not so much take to heart, know-  
ed from the influence of the  
no are around you. My home,  
longer pleasant to me, nor can  
ties thus destroyed piecemeal,  
so great a disgust that every  
e hitherto beheld, has been like  
soul."

Sir," he returned, resuming his  
you will soon have an oppor-  
ng quarters more suitable to  
feelings, where you will, per-  
yourself in a less insubordinate  
manner. I have written again  
wards about the commission pro-

per, and discomfited at the se-  
arent, and the triumphant looks  
gentleman my rival in his fa-  
not quit the presence without a

parting word or two, expressive of my disgust at the young Jew's proceedings. I spoke of him in no measured terms; and finished my discourse by bidding him beware how he continued his present system of falsehood and detraction.

"I swear by heaven," said I, "that any repetition of your conduct, in endeavouring to alienate the affection of my only parent from me, shall procure you chastisement, even though you took refuge on his very hearth!"

This outbreak produced a frightful accession of female clamour. The old attorney, too, who was too wary to take a decided part in the discussion whilst I was present, by his elevated eyebrows and shrugged up shoulders, sufficiently testified his feelings. The young cub, however, emboldened by the shrill clamour of the females, stepped round to where I was standing, and with fist clenched defied me to strike him.

My father, who, enraged and excited beyond his strength, had sat down in his leathern chair, with hoarse voice, desired me instantly to leave the room. I looked at the young Jew with an eye that told him how much I should have



accommodate him, and was turning  
when he echoed and repeated my  
words to quit the apartment. The next  
moment he stretched upon the floor.

He rose slowly from his seat, his finger  
pointed to the door, and his countenance resem-  
bled a corpse. He made but one step  
and fell senseless upon the hearth.  
It seemed, a dreadful finale to the dis-  
aster, and I stood aghast for the moment.

I attempted to describe my feelings  
to my friends. Gladly, indeed, would I have  
seen the destruction of half the avenues  
and buildings in Yorkshire, could I  
have felt the blow, which falling upon  
my father, had it appeared hit  
my father. Whilst I bewailed my  
loss aloud, and tried to restore the  
cheerfulness to life, the females of the company,  
during my endeavours, were upbraiding  
my villany which had slain him. The  
company meanwhile quietly awaited  
whether my father recovered or  
not the same to him. Equal to either  
was so entangled his affairs, that

he had, at all events, secured a suit which would serve his turn.

After awhile, to my great joy, my father opened his eyes, and I beheld signs of returning animation, and assisted by the servants I conveyed him to his room. The sight of his recovery restored also the care and tenderness of his wife; and the party once more resuming their kind attentions towards him, I left him to their care.

## CHAPTER XII.

1 though the headlong cavalier,  
er rough and smooth, in wild career,  
emed racing with the wind ;  
s sad companion ghastly pale,  
d darksome as a widow's veil,  
are kept his seat behind.

DRYDEN.

ROUGH I had dispatched a servant on  
ck for the nearest medical aid, yet I  
ned to go in quest also of my friend,  
obe, of whose skill and judgment I  
ason to think highly. I therefore rode  
as if a whole legion of fiends were  
ack, till I reached the little village where  
t.

s lucky enough to find him at his  
e, although retired for the night, and  
d to him the nature of the case, without

dismounting from my horse. Receiving his promise to be at the Grange without delay, I returned towards my home as speedily as I had ridden from it.

At the commencement of the avenue, which had unhappily caused this most unlucky dispute, I drew bridle, to proceed somewhat more deliberately, as well for the purpose of breathing my panting horse, as from the deep gloom of the place; for, owing to the great size and massive foliage of the trees, the avenue was so dark, that unless well acquainted with the locality, a horseman might easily have been unseated by the over-reaching boughs. As I therefore cautiously made my way, I was suddenly aware of a moderately sized light, which, at first, only shewing me in succession the trunks of the oaks in my progress, at the moment, I rather felt grateful towards. As I proceeded, however, the light growing rapidly larger, at length forced me to ride outside the avenue, and stop and gaze more curiously upon it. Whilst I did so, it rose into a broad sheet of flame.

Some buildings were evidently on fire, and burning away in the direction of the Grange.

In a few minutes more, the avenue became

d from end to end, and the Grange, mination, displayed with its various as though the sun itself was shining mid-day.

ing hubbub also was now heard, and well,

men by night and negligence, the fire ed in populous cities.

, also, like the motes which "mine he Bonny Black Bear at Cumnor saw a his cup of canary, began to flit about e flame. In fact, there needed little onvince me that some of the outbuild- e Grange had suddenly taken fire.

ng spurs to my horse, with the speed t, I rode onwards. Just when about into a path which ran slanting across e, and led from the farm-yard and ngs, I saw a figure stealing towards so intent in looking back upon the t conflagration, as not to have noticed ach upon the soft grass. Suddenly, he heard the hoof-tread of my steed ; ping short, turned and strove to avoid e movement was suspicious, and I

---

resolved to arrest him ; and in a few plunges more, was nearly at his side. The cover was so near, that, had he not been lame, he might easily have reached it ; but I threw myself from my horse, and seized him. The increasing conflagration shewed me the features of Ephraim Roughead, the man whose leg I had wounded on that same evening.

The fellow seemed so scared at the rencontre, that he was quite unable to answer the questions I put to him. I therefore, although suspecting something wrong from his strange manner, after recognizing, released him, and putting spurs to my steed, galloped onwards.

The nature of the conflagration became more apparent every step I took. A whole rick-yard had taken fire, and was burning with such fury, that barns, cart-stabling, outbuildings, cottages, and nearly all the *et ceteras* of a well-appointed farm-yard, were becoming involved in the general ruin.

The confusion of such a scene needs hardly be related. Men were to be seen hurrying hither and thither, impeding each other's efforts, marring each other's labour, and helping the flames by their unorganized and unauthorized

ers again were flying in every  
ot where they might have rendered  
e attending to the suggestions of  
all directing and none to obey.  
t for water, another roared for  
adders; whilst women clustered  
od screaming as loudly as though  
d each particular howl was worth  
e in full play. Water! water!  
y, and no man ran to fetch it.  
ntaining the cart-horses and cows,  
e ignited, and there the scene was  
essing, for the cattle having been  
hese wiseacres, in their panic on  
g the flames, the wretched ani-  
all attempts to bring them out;  
nd plunging in their stalls, were  
d and burnt.

e to get water from the moat,  
Master Launcelot" had made that  
for, than to have. In the midst  
on, I made my appearance on the  
gh somewhat of the latest, my  
ored something like confidence  
ongst the labourers and farm ser-

Managing to get together a couple of working parties, I established a chain from the horse-pond to that part of the outbuildings nearest to the Grange; for the wind setting strongly in that direction threatened danger to the building. Heading the other party myself, we scaled the walls, and with axes cut away and pulled down the out-houses, as long as the heat would allow us to work there. By this means we saved the Grange itself from destruction, but before morning dawned, most of the buildings of our farm, together with granaries filled with corn, and a large and valuable lot of hay and straw, twenty horses, and a decent accompaniment of cows and pigs, were entirely consumed.

The conduct of the young gentleman, my Jew relative, was as extraordinary as it was characteristic. Amidst all this confusion, having risen from his bed on the very first alarm, he had sallied out to observe the fire, and turning up an old easy leathern chair, which had (amongst other articles of furniture) been hurled from the windows of the bailiff's cottage, he deliberately seated himself opposite the blaze, and lighting his havannah, sat and smoked, and



progress of the conflagration, with the utmost satisfaction, content, and

of the other members of his family was, I am afraid to say (although eccentric) very much more wicked; for papers and deeds were missing which were of the consequence for me to have obtained after my father's demise; but never afterwards forthcoming.

These disastrous events had happened fast upon each other, by my unlucky influence, I had every moment the truth of.

matter, of what I had so little, mixed up with half a scruple of conscience, and these things had not perhaps been so. The farm buildings had been fired, and I had so unjustly injured, and it was evident that the matter was brought home to him, and he was in a circumstance that long weighed heavily on his conscience. The avenue which, I had not again to advocate the matter (for aught I know to the contrary)

floating upon the broad waves of the Atlantic, in the form of, "petty traffickers, or portly argosies." At all events no vestige of it will be found at this time in front of the Grange.

The vile crew too, who had insinuated themselves into the good graces of my father, and were stealthily plotting his ruin, had I but possessed tact and forbearance enough to have watched quietly, instead of waging open war with them, might have perhaps shewn themselves to him in their true colours. But I served to keep them in check by my violence, thus making myself the most obnoxious person apparently, of the party. My father too, I had openly and seriously offended, and reduced to the verge of the grave, as I might indeed have expected would be likely to happen, from his present weak state and irascible disposition.

By care and medical skill, however, he was at length pronounced out of danger, and was advised, as soon as possible, to leave his home, and try the benefit of change of scene.

## CHAPTER XIII.

A willow cabin at your gate,  
My soul within the house ;  
Tortures of contemned love,  
No sound even in the dead of night.

SHAKESPEARE.

I, for some time, mentioned my  
the hall, but where, indeed, much  
had been lately passed. Whilst these  
were happening at my own home,  
perhaps be blamed for availing  
the intimacy I was upon there, to  
occasional refuge.

who, during the time she remained  
in her childhood, had grieved at the ac-  
cession of the destruction going on,  
the fecility of my father who allowed  
her to stay in Scotland, having been sum-  
moned by her mother, the Duchess

Miss Villeroy had also received a sort of invitation, which indeed might be called a command, to accompany her; but, in this one instance my influence overruled her Grace's wish, and she remained at Marston Hall with old Mrs. Allworthy to keep her company in her retirement, and myself to sigh at her feet. The old Earl of Marston too, occasionally came down for a few days, together with others of her family.

With this paradise, therefore, as a refuge, and where I was the welcomed and cherished guest of the radiant creature its occupant and mistress, the sorrows and annoyances of my own home sat lighter upon me than they otherwise would have done. Still, however, I always experienced a sort of fear, whenever I approached the Hall, of some untoward event, likely to interrupt the fair terms I was upon, with its inmates. A presentiment of evil, which I could never effectually shake off, eternally pervaded me. I seemed born under an unlucky star, and the certainty of my destiny to be fixed on my mind.

For some time Miss Villeroy had not seen her betrothed, and as she now often confessed

aded even to hear from him. I  
that each day we spent together,  
ing courage to break off an en-  
ch she now loathed to think upon.  
however, I never alluded to my  
mention of his name, being suffi-  
to find myself gaining ground  
aces; a vain hope, alas! but too

to have been once possessed  
or of a heart  
with labour and unrest,  
en forced to depart!—

er, was the constant presentiment  
ich I was haunted. Completely  
the good opinion and presence  
I seemed indeed not to belong to

vertheless, was not a whit the less  
dwelling of my ancestors; whilst  
on the contrary sneaked about  
as if afraid to encounter my eye  
y reproof. They saw, doubtless,  
omething dangerous in me, which

their wisdom and their villany taught them to fear. The young cub, especially, since the lesson I had given him, had a wholesome and praiseworthy dislike even to pass me in the house ; but his countenance showed the hatred of his heart, and I could see that he stored up the blow I had given him, to be paid for with compound interest at the proper opportunity.

Under these circumstances, as I said before, I saw my home as little as I could, and old Mistress Allworthy, whose goodness of disposition was not to be kept in check by the narrow ideas of the more worldly-minded portion of society, but who always acted from the dictates of her own heart, was never so happy as when I was a visitor and inmate of the Hall.

Thus, then, matters continued at a stand some little time. My father was now much recovered, and, I understood, meditated leaving his home for Italy, where he had been advised to go by his medical attendants, for change of scene.

One morning, I was beguiling the time, and amusing myself in those luxuriant meadows con-

ces of water, which were called the ponds to which I have alluded, a sequestered spot, where the monks went to "daff the world aside, and Indeed, I have generally remarked, where the mouldering remains of establishments are found, the sur- roundings seem greener and more lux- urant than any other spot in its neighbour- hood. They are lands, on which these drones live away their cloistered life, and pass their idle time by the help of the rod and net at command.

They are, however, landless, had they "land and beeves," where they were haunted "the dappled deer;" and with fish, and tribute payable from the tenants near.

I looked around, therefore, seated in the marshy swamp of these stock ponds, when anon captured a goodly carp, which was twofold, from following my bait in a quiet vicinity, as would have been the case with Isaac Walton.

While amusing myself, a servant ap- peared, and informed me that my presence was



required at home, my father being desirous of seeing me.

Somewhat surprized, at this unusual summons, I immediately obeyed the order, and waited upon him in his room. Not having seen him since the affair in which I had made so unlucky a hit regarding the avenue, the opportunity of an interview was hailed by me with joy.

I loved my father, and, I think, he entertained all the affection of a parent towards myself; but we were both of a stern and unbending disposition, each kept the other at a most unaffectionate distance. There was too much of strict discipline in his mode of reclaiming me from the ungovernable state he supposed I had fallen into, owing to his own previous neglect of my youth, and he fully believed that I had become of so haughty, overbearing and insolent a disposition, that it was absolutely dangerous to thwart or contradict me.

I, on the other hand, felt that he ought to have known me better, and not have thus suffered his judgment to be warped and his affections to be alienated from me by the artful



om he had connected himself. I  
fore, willingly have "hinged my  
begged his forgiveness for having  
tionally offended him; but that rash  
ch he himself had given me, held  
nd reserved. I could not bend,  
own parent, where I felt I had  
ng, and thus we once more met.

him wasted and pallid with the  
had undergone, consequent upon  
f his illness, but still possessing all  
nd presence, for which he was al-

He was alone, and, with a look  
erity, but with a countenance al-  
ore in sorrow than in anger," he  
to take a seat. Most people, who  
from paralysis have a distressed  
expression. So it was with my  
his mouth being drawn down, gave  
a still more unhappy and changed  
I felt my eyes fill with tears as  
him, but I conquered my feelings  
nt their flowing. He also, I saw,  
agry feelings to his aid.

ent for you, Sir," said he, "to  
my wishes regarding your future

career. It is somewhat painful to me to have to enter upon matters of business in my present precarious state, as any exertion is likely to bring upon me a severe return of pain and illness. I will thank you, therefore, to hear what I have to say, and make no reply.

“ You have, somewhat against my wishes, chosen to apply for a commission in the army. I have tried that life myself, and had reason to be disgusted with it as a profession. I objected to it at first in your case, from a desire that you should content yourself here on the estate of your forefathers, and lead the life of a respectable, and not altogether useless, member of society. The gentleman of landed property, who lives on his own estate, improving his poorer neighbours, (and within the sphere of his influence), scattering plenty and diffusing happiness, I consider a character fit for the notice of approving heaven. But the life of an officer in time of peace, on the contrary, I think a most unprofitable and miserable waste of existence. I have, however, seen enough of you lately, to suspect that a quiet country life would never suit your disposition. I have also changed my views entirely regarding you,

more reluctantly gave my consent  
I now desire (since such is the  
to follow the profession you have  
I tell you before hand, that you  
enter a service in which, according  
adage, 'there are more kicks  
e,' and to string another old saw  
of that, like Sancho's proverbs, I  
re you, there are but two happy  
soldier's life,—'the day he puts  
y he puts off his red coat.'"

was not quite the real opinion  
ained of the profession of arms,  
l been more devoted to the service

But, although he affected to  
follow my choice, he had yet so  
remaining, that he would have  
ad renounced it.

to his desire I made no reply, and  
his discourse: "What I now  
is, that you should either write  
the levee of the commander-in-  
ng his memory in regard to the  
to your first application. State  
ime that you are ready to serve

in any part of the globe; for I must inform you, that the profession you have fixed on, must be now your whole and sole trust. A soldier's life you have chosen, and a soldier you must now become. Matters are altered with me here, since you first applied for your commission; I granted your request then the more readily, as I thought a year or two spent in country quarters, together with an Irish detachment, would be quite sufficient to tire you of the foppery of your hussar jacket and steel scabbard. I therefore considered it as good a way of amusing your romance, and passing a few years of your youth, as any other. My circumstances, however, as I told you, are now much changed, and I no longer possess the means to allow of your making that figure amongst your brother officers, which I intended. I shall, however, be able to give you a fair start in life, and have no doubt but that, with my interest, at the Horse-guards I shall be enabled to push you up the list as rapidly as you can desire."

I thanked him, and he continued his discourse.

"If you ask my advice, I should recommend

the infantry, as then you will learn  
it best. In that, however, I leave  
you please. Let not, however,  
be lost; for the life you have  
is disreputable to yourself, and  
miserable to hear of. What little  
spent at home has been marked,  
other, by great want of proper  
our last interview, when you in-  
self into my presence, and over-  
tion, assaulted the brother of my  
ciently shewed me the error I had  
not sending you to a public  
your violence would have been  
ned and corrected. Your bearing  
improper, that I had vowed never  
ore."

used for a few moments, and then

:

ou feel these fits of violence likely  
a you," he continued, "I should  
you to seek medical advice, and  
bled, either in the arm, or by  
if your head was shaved, and a  
d, in the same way they treat a

maniac in hospital, it might perhaps save you from much after misery.

"I will hear no reply, Sir," said he, rising to put an end to my visit, "either write or attend the levee of the Commander-in-chief; meanwhile, consider well what I have said, and I wish you all success in the profession you have chosen; but I tell you fairly, before you enter upon it, that it leads to nothing. I am now too ill to speak further on the subject; but will in a few days see you again, and hear the event of your second application."

Thus finished my interview with my father. Being forbidden to reply, I was precluded from any attempt at reconciliation; for although he accused me of so much violence of temper, I well knew that had I attempted to disobey him, he would have perhaps been reduced to the same situation I had brought him into at our last conference.

I was not, however, sorry that he had directed me to write to the Horse-guards; as although I feared to leave the neighbourhood of the hall, yet I felt that had he (in addition to his other somewhat tyrannical treatment) put a

ny now accepting the commission should have been altogether in a situation. I, therefore, indited a Commander-in-chief without delay, and my horse, resolved to put it into the little village of Woodville, which is a mile from Marston. Indeed, it were to attempt to ride in any other direction if I did turn the head of the horse. Lady Constance had given me, and I knew his old home, and come here, that at the first opportunity I directed his steps in the direction he was allowed eventually to traverse. With the rider: no spot seemed so good so pleasant, as the short cut through the plantations, and across the common in sight of the venerable look- ing house was brought to a stand by the trees of the surrounding park. The trees which grew there, and overshadowed the house to my eyes more noble and more other in the county. The session, which thus in the heyday of the summer, comes upon us like some violent



distemper, and drives away all interest and enjoyment unless pertaining to the being who alone fills all our thoughts, and distracts us with alternate doubt, fear, and delight.

Here, then, oftimes when I did not think proper to introduce myself into the presence of the ladies, it was my wont to pause and catch a glimpse of the neighbourhood which they sanctified by dwelling in ; and, like the knight of the mirrors, throwing myself on the ground, whilst I allowed my horse to feed upon the pasture with which the place abounded, I indulged in the silence and solitude necessary to my amorous thoughts. On these occasions the Muses were not so opposite but they deigned to visit me sometimes ; and I composed a whole litany of songs, sonnets, and poems to the fair empress of my soul.

At the present time, whilst lying thus along "like a dropt acorn," I composed a rhapsody, which I thought so excellent, that I determined to serenade my mistress with it that very night. Accordingly I arose, and proceeding to the village at hand, stabled my steed, and resolved to dine at the little inn there, and then, accom-



ade and the dews of night, spend  
orning in wandering about in the  
Hall.

ched my letter and reasoned with  
w every moment I passed away  
t, was time lost, "like offered  
to be regained.

of the little inn where I baited,  
ed a rasher and eggs for my  
accordingly served up by her  
om lass with corkscrew ringlets,  
red as her top-knot. During  
f her attendance upon me, she  
by thrumming upon a broken-  
ment, which she denominated a  
which I borrowed of the fair  
d me in my serenade.

shone out brightly as I crossed  
eaping the garden-wall like the  
ague, found myself under the  
I adored. The clock tolled  
d with my back against a mul-  
nearly hidden by the shade it

was rewarded by the appearance

of a light at Miss Villeroy's window, which flitted backwards and forwards in the apartment, and then became stationary. "The flame o' the taper (methought) bows towards her." I was about to strike upon my instrument, but at that moment she appeared, and, throwing open the window, looked out upon the moonlit garden beneath. What a picture was there for a Juliet! Her dark ringlets almost concealed her cheek of cream as she leant from the casement. She looked long and fixedly in the direction of the Grange. I was about to discover myself, when some one within the room speaking to her, she withdrew and shut the casement.

Presently the light was removed, and all remained quiet. Then when I thought the inhabitants of the hall had retired for the night, I touched the strings of my guitar, and commenced my serenade.

#### THE SERENADE.

You sleep—and o'er your slumbers light  
May happy visions play,  
And people thy soft dreams at night  
With all the joys of day.

—your long hair twined around  
like mountain snow ;  
et lips hushed in slumber sound,  
re with music flow.

—your dark eye shines not now,  
ams like love's own star :  
thness of your soft white brow  
row never mar !

—your small hands gently lie  
wdrops of the spring ;  
e that guards thy close shut eye,  
he black cock's wing,

—and on your lip a smile,  
by young Cupid, lies ;—  
eloquence would wile  
from the skies.

—in beauty more supreme  
ersia's daughters proud,  
ly than the early beam  
lds the morning cloud.

—like moonbeams on a flower  
ty sublime,  
a light a joyous hour  
he breast of Time.

—like some rich lily fair,  
ests in shady dell.  
ar heart is any care  
a who loves thee well ?

## CHAPTER XIV.

Thou fearful man,  
Affliction is enamoured of thy parts,  
And thou art wedded to calamity.

SHAKESPEARE.

Strike on the tinder, ho !  
Give me a taper ;—call up all my people ;  
This accident is not unlike my dream ;  
Belief of it oppresses me already ;  
Light, I say ! light !

SHAKESPEARE.

I HAD proceeded thus far with my song, and might have perhaps continued it, till I favoured the night owls with as many more stanzas, when suddenly I became aware that I was not alone in the gardens, and not only was I accompanying myself on the guitar, but that some one was seconding my efforts. Indeed, I had been half conscious, during the two last stanzas, that a sort of quavering chorus was

me ; but I took it for the echo, or of my own voice sent back from the walls of the building. However, the words were repeated in a sort of half-maudlin manner, by a figure which, leaning upon a tree, stood in the shadow of the trees, like the huntsmen in *Der Freischütz*. Thinking it one of the keepers, who attracted by the melody of my guitar, I bade him good night, and shifted off to bed, but the fellow anticipated me by saying "Good night."

"Good night to you, Master Blount," said the fellow, "caterwauling this, you're making the waits played as well as you, without setting up to hear."

He was evidently half-drunk, and as the moon shined full upon his face, I recollected the truculent-looking fellow I have before mentioned, as having had an unlucky adventure with Miss Villiers. Indeed, I have omitted to record in the first encounter with this fellow, my success in purchasing his silence, regarding the death of the Baronet.

At the present moment, I felt annoyed and vexed at his presence and interruption, and would fain have left the garden, but his dogged insolence permitted not my doing so. His success, on a former occasion, rendered him again desirous of making an attack upon my purse; and had I acceded to his demand for money, all perhaps had been well; but my choler arose, and seizing him by the throat, I threatened, unless he quitted the spot speedily, and peaceably, to drag him from the gardens.

He was, however, a resolute fellow, as ready to strike as to speak, and not easily daunted.

"Stand back," cried he, suddenly shaking himself clear of my grasp, "unless you want a charge of shot through your lungs."

He clapped the muzzle of his piece to my breast as he said this. The next instant I had struck it aside, and closed with him. He pulled the trigger as I did so, and the smash of half-a-dozen panes of glass accompanied by a female shriek told that, although he had missed my unfortunate carcase, he had brought down some person within the house.

It was even so. I had never considered

that my serenade was likely to be of any one besides Miss Villefact, had not so much as heard a; whilst poor old Mistress Allreposed upon the ground-floor, effectually prevented from sleeping rose from her bed to observe who stood before her lattice, and received of the poacher's fowling-piece full mate face.

I thought the unlucky villain had been deroy; but a single glance showed me not the case; the casement on the left being the one shattered.

I held the fellow so tightly, that he could not have discharged his barrel into my body, could he have got a gripe, he found it impossible to do so; indeed, I felt almost inclined to kill him, so great was my anger at the murder he had caused to my friend, I thank Heaven, the words of my friend that very morning, came to my mind, and I contented myself with being secure.

When himself unable to get free, he



made a desperate stab at my breast, with a knife he managed to get out of his pocket. I was, however, aware of his purpose, and prevented the thrust taking effect, except by slightly grazing my ribs. And now commenced a deadly struggle for the mastery, in the midst of which we went down together, and lay rolling and fighting under the tree where I had begun my unlucky serenade. It was fortunate, indeed, that we fell at that moment, as I heard, whilst we grappled together, a casement swung cautiously open, and the servants in full consultation.

"There a be Thummus," said the head-coachman; "I saw'd un go under the mulberry-tree this moment. Give un brown Bess like a good un."

The sweeping discharge of a well-filled blunderbuss immediately rung out, and half-a-score of slugs rattled amongst the foliage above our heads.

My foe now redoubled his efforts to escape, discontinuing his murderous attack, in the desire to shake himself clear of my gripe. I however held him secure, and dragged him into the open space.



The moment I did so, the gun of the footman was again discharged from the open window, and the shots (luckily too far off to do us any great harm) penetrated our clothes, and stung our bodies like a swarm of hornets. The poacher shook his ears as the shower flew about him, and half-a-dozen pellets entered his black-looking visage: a small retribution for what he had just inflicted upon Mistress Allworthy's respected countenance. I called out to these heroes to cease firing, as I had captured the offender, or rather that the culprits had captured each other. Such, however, was their alarm, that (having reloaded the blunderbuss) they gave us the benefit of its contents, and another discharge ere they did so; and shot and slugs flew about our bodies, whistling in the night air, and cutting the shrubs of the garden all round the spot where we continued so affectionately locked in each other's embrace. Indeed, I should have been either obliged to give up my capture, and remove from the vicinity and range of the besieged and the wall-piece they made such a din with, had it not been for the interference of the commanding officer, the steward

or butler of the Hall, who, recognizing my voice, effected a cessation of hostilities.

On the sally of the garrison, therefore (which immediately took place, on finding an ally under the walls, and the enemy taken prisoner) I delivered him up to their custody. As for me, I entered the house in fear and trepidation almost afraid to learn the extent of the mischief I had caused.

I found the female servants clinging for protection around the portly form of Thummas Brasington the coachman, who (although during the heat of the engagement he had winked at the flash and report of his own weapon) was now manfully protecting and chiding the fears of the females. From this party I learned that it was Mrs. Allworthy who was the sufferer; and had I believed the direful story they related, I should have credited an account dreadful as the exaggerated report of Sir Peter Teazle's duel, in which the pistol ball of his opponent, after doing him incredible mischief, knocked over the general postman with a double-letter from Northamptonshire.

Leaving them, therefore, I sought Mrs.

Allworthy's apartment, knocked at the door, and begged to know the extent of the mischief. It was answered by Miss Villeroy herself, who, on the alarm, had hastily thrown on her clothes, and descended to Mrs. Allworthy's room. From her I learned that the old lady's respected countenance had been grievously wounded by small shot: and although she was much pained by the infliction, she treated the accident lightly; and having witnessed the passage of arms before her window, was more anxious about my safety than her own misfortune.

As Miss Villeroy herself was, however, in much alarm about her friend, as soon as I had learned the extent of the mischief, I returned to the village, in order to despatch a medical man to her assistance.

As I hastened onwards, I held council with myself about the unlucky chances that had of late befallen me. My acquaintance amongst the faculty was becoming extensive.

"This is the third errand, Master Ratcliffe Blount," said I to myself, "that you have undertaken of the same sort, and all to repair the mishaps and misfortunes you yourself have caused." The reflection was not a pleasant one. I hated

unpleasant reflections. "What signifies looking back," said I, "when the journey lies forward? But then, that unlucky scoundrel of a poacher. My intemperate zeal, in capturing that rascal, was the most unlucky scrape of all. *N'importe*, 'twas too late to think about it now; the deed was done, and I had reached the village."

Knocking up mine hostess of the little inn at Woodville where I had dined, she directed me to the house of the most eminent practitioner of the place.

"If you can get him up," said the landlady, "you'll be cleverer than most people, for he's a queer chap yon, and not fond of attending upon folks, either by night or day."

I however effectually aroused, waited for, and returned with the doctor to Marston Hall.

Mistress Allworthy had now left her apartment, and was laying on a sofa in the drawing-room. She was pallid and faint from loss of blood, but lively as ever.

"Come, Sir," said she, "produce the man of art, for, believe me, I am very ill; though, indeed, after all, I believe a bottle of Ruspini's Styptic, and a half-pennyworth of lint, (if I had them here), would be worth all the surgeons in

the kingdom. However, let's see your 'Great Medicine,' if indeed, (though I hope not), you have one with you."

Dr. Misaubin, the professional I thus captured and brought with me, was an elderly man, of eccentric manners and extraordinary appearance. He was almost unknown to the Villeroys, they having heretofore so seldom resided at Marston. His conversation was curious, as his manners were odd, being interlarded with a continual series of scraps from old plays, and extracts from his various reading, and he introduced himself accordingly.

Stopping short, as soon as he entered the apartment, he quietly took out and adjusted his spectacles, and with his gold-headed cane to his nose, he bent a long and searching look upon every part of the room, and each individual in it. He finished his survey as soon as his eye alighted upon the invalid, and he immediately stepped up, and examined her wounded face.

"Upon my word, Madam," said he, taking from his pocket a flask, and pouring out about a glassful of its contents, and offering her. "Upon my word, Madam, you seem to have been made

the mark of smoky muskets ; permit me to prescribe a restorative in the first instance."

After examining the wounds of his patient the Doctor desired her to be removed back to her own apartments, in order that he might extract some of the shot which disfigured her countenance. Miss Villeroy accompanied her and I remained to learn the result.

The night was far spent before Miss Villeroy returned. She informed me that the patient was much exhausted from loss of blood ; but that the doctor had succeeded in rendering her a trifle less like a tattooed red Indian. I was obliged to explain the part I had in the transaction, for which I ventured the more readily to hope for forgiveness, as the accident had happened from my devotion and serenade.

I threw myself upon my knees, as I pleaded my suit. Miss Villeroy seemed annoyed and vexed at the untoward event which had happened. She was seated beside the table, her cheek leant upon her hand, and as I seized upon its fellow,

My lips, two blushing pilgrims ready stood,  
To smooth that rough touch with a gentle kiss.

At that moment the door opened, and Dr. Misaubin re-entered.

The Doctor was a great observer. He stopped short when he saw he had interrupted a love-scene, bowed to the lady as she left the room, and then approaching, as I arose from my devotions, accosted me with a quotation from his favourite Hudibras:—

“ Forgive me fair, and only blame  
The extravagancy of my flame ;  
Since 'tis too much at once to shew  
Excess of love and temper too.

“How do you once more, Sir?” he continued. “ Really, you rode before me, at so fearful a pace just now, that until this moment I have not had opportunity of exchanging a word with you. You reminded me, Sir, of that humorous fellow, Andrew Fairservice, who galloped over moss and moor on the night he acted as guide to Francis Osbaldiston across the Border. I really was obliged to track you by the sparks from your horse’s shoes, upon the beaten flint. May I beg the favour of your name ?”

“ Blount, Sir,” I said, “ at your service.”

“ What, of the Grange here, hard by ?”

"The same," I answered.

"Truly, I am glad to have the opportunity of making your acquaintance, Mr. Blount," returned the Doctor. "And now, inform me if that young lady who left the apartment is Miss Villeroy. I thought as much," said he, "from her extraordinary beauty. You admire Miss Villeroy, Mr. Blount; I see you do.

If lusty love should go in quest of beauty,

Where should he find it fairer than in Blanche?

"Don't be angry, Mr. Blount," he continued, offering me his snuff-box; "take a pinch of this rappee. Rather a curious sort of an accident this old gentlewoman my patient, has met with."

"I was about to ask you, Sir," said I, interrupting his loquacious mood, "what is your opinion of her case? I trust that a few days' inconvenience to her will be the extent of the mischief."

"A few days, what?" almost shrieked the Doctor; "why what in the fiend's name do you—do you pretend to know about gun shot wounds, my dear Sir; that old lady will perhaps have erisipelas in a few days,



and die in the torments of St. Anthony's fire. Inconvenience! quotha as, who should say, a female aged, without mark of mouth or even tooth in her head, could receive a matter of a couple of score of leaden pellets in her cheeks, lips, and chin, with half as many perforating her neck and breast, and only suffer a few days' inconvenience! Sir, I tell you, upon the faith of a practitioner of five-and-thirty years, *that* old lady, if she does not expire of erysipelatous inflammation, will be likely to be seized with tetanus, in the vulgar tongue, lock-jaw, but

Why so pale and wan fond lover,  
Prithee why so pale?

Come, I am not quite serious, and hope and trust that, as you say, a few days of my attendance will set all to rights. Do me the favour to lay hands upon that bell. I am told there is another patient here in the person of the prisoner ta'en. The captive of thy spear and thy bow, and whom, ere I depart, it is necessary to visit."

I accordingly accompanied the lively Doctor into a room, in the lower part of the house,

where my evil genius was kept in durance, guarded by that redoubtable hero of the blunderbuss, Thummas Brassington, who, weapon in hand, was in waiting as gaoler and sentinel without the door.

"Come, Buckingham," said the Doctor, "some of your function ; turn the key, and let us see this formidable hero."

The poacher was sitting in a chair, close against the wall, with his feet thrust out before him, and apparently half asleep. The Doctor took the candle and approached him :

"Why, you cateran, you blackguard, you born devil ! as Nichol Jarvie has it, you don't mean to say that it is you who have been causing all this disturbance in the dead of the night, do you ? God help thee ! what a visage thou hast gotten : what with thy accustomed hideousness, and the blood and dirt thou art begrimed in, you look like the genius of rapine and murder."

"I never murdered any one yet," said the fellow, "whatever I *may* do ; and that's more than some of the present company can say. I don't allude to you, Doctor, though I dare say you've not gotten a cleaner breast than others of the physicking trade ; but we shall see, since

young master there has brought me to this ; whether or not I cannot make a nice story of his doings."

"What the devil does the injurious thief mean," said the Doctor. "Hold your tongue thou canker of a calm world, or tell us where you have been hurt, and what we can do for you. Are you struck anywhere, besides in your Caliban visage? Strange that I should be called from my bed to visit two patients who have both been peppered in the face with No. four."

"There's not much the matter with me, Doctor," said the poacher: "I've had small shot in my hide before to-day. So unless you mean to release me, I shan't trouble you to bother yourself about my wounds."

"I let thee out of durance vile!" said the physician; "I unmanacle thy caitiff limbs! Marry, I'll see thee hanged (which I think in truth I am like enough to do) ere I give thee opportunity 'to rob a foot further.'"

"Then," returned the ruffian, "go and be d—d, and take your cursed gibberish elsewhere."

"I think, Mr. Blount," said the Doctor,

"our consultation has lasted a sufficient time. With regard to this gentleman, I know of nothing so likely to suit his malady, as a ligature applied over the muscles of his throat, and an uncertain foundation beneath his feet. 'Unless a man should marry a gallows, and beget young gibbets, I ne'er saw one so prone.' He is troubled with a redundancy of rascality; this fellow, I know him better than he knows himself. Thomas Brassington," continued he, taking the coachman's gun from him, "traverse me your caliver thus; and attend upon this *civil* gentleman *within* the apartment, mind *within* the apartment; or whilst you are looking fierce and playing soldiers there outside the door, this 'minion of the moon' will be shaking the dust from his feet, and making himself beautiful upon the hills withoutside the mansion. Why, this fellow, Mr. Blount, is of exceeding honesty, and has broken half the jails in the country. Now, Sir, I am ready to attend you."

And the Doctor, leaving the apartment, ascended to the hall.

"Your guitar, Sir," said the footman, who had waited on us: "we found it lying under

the mulberry-tree, and the man's gun also, Sir, we have got here."

"Keep the gun till called for," I said.

"And light the kitchen fire with that d—d crotchet box," added the Doctor; "for I never yet knew or heard of any good that came of your Don-Giovannizing and serenading old Dowagers by moonlight. And now, Sir John Blount, of the Dale, or Grange, or whatever else you love to be styled by, what are you about to do with yourself after this last action? Do you mean to 'incontinently drown yourself?' Or are you going to your own home to bed? Or, as the lovely Aurora is just about to disclose herself from the balconies of the east, suppose you ride home with me. We will have a strong cup of coffee, my custom always in the morning, when I have been molested and called up in the night; after that I will show you over my farm; after which, you shall breakfast with me. When that is over, we will have a dish of chat, and by that time it will be requisite for me to revisit my patient here."

I accepted the Doctor's offer, and the village being only two miles from the hall, he mounted his horse, and I accompanied him home.

The old gentleman's house was just at the end of the long street, (of which the village was, indeed, composed) and he let himself in without disturbing the servants, after having stabled his steed, and taken off the bridle and saddle himself. There was fire in his parlour, coffee-pot on the hob, and cups and saucers on the table. The Doctor boiled his coffee, blew up his fire, uttered at least a couple of dozen quotations from his favourite Shakspeare as he did so, lighted a cigar, and motioning me to seat myself in one of the easy chairs by the fire, took the other himself, and then pouring out his favourite beverage, leaned back in his seat, and scarcely uttered even a line from his beloved author, until he had puffed away his cigar to the very nose.

"My Havannah has evaporated," he then said, "and now I am ready to give audience to any tongue, speak it of what it may. Mr. Blount, you must know I have rather taken a fancy to you. You seem to me a proper and extremely modest youth. Come, another cup of coffee; I always think that the cursed misery of being dragged from one's bed, and out of a fresh sleep in the middle of the night,

is nearly atoned for by the delight of a cup of well made coffee and mine Havannah, on returning home, when,

Like a lobster boiled, the morn  
From black to red begins to turn.

And now, if you feel inclined to wander with me over my farm, have with you."

The Docter's farm was about three quarters of a mile from his house, and was his hobby. Being independent of his profession, which yet he professed to practise, he spent most of his time at his farm; indeed, when once he got safe there, it was a hard job to draw him from his earth. He had only been a year in the village of Woodville, having for some few years before resided in the town of Sheffield; but his reputation as a clever, although extremely odd man, was great. In early life, he had been surgeon to a regiment of the line, and seen much service. Indeed, so great a favourite was he in the corps to which he belonged, that his retirement was regarded as a calamity by the whole corps, from the lieutenant-colonel to the drummer. In the regiment, he went by the name of Will Shakspeare; not from any likeness

he bore to the bust or picture of nature's 'private secretary,' but because he had him, amongst others, eternally at his tongue's end, and consequently, whenever he spoke, quotations from various authors seemed to quarrel for utterance. With the Doctor then, I walked forth, accompanied by half a dozen bandy-legged terriers of all sorts and sizes; so that, being an odd-looking little man with an exceeding red face, and not particularly smart in his appearance, wearing an antique and half military cut coat, and horseman's boots pulled up nearly to his knees, at the first glance he was rather a puzzling figure to understand. The ugly pack of bandy-legged curs I have mentioned, found some difficulty in keeping up with the heels of the Doctor's horse, who in figure and equipage, looked something between Napoleon Bonaparte and a rat-catcher.

He shewed me his farm, and the improvements he had made; and might, perhaps, have omitted to go home to breakfast altogether, had he not recollected having invited me to partake of that meal with him. Accordingly we returned to enjoy some of the luxuries his hobby afforded, and found a table covered with a meal,



which would have served for a highland breakfast.

“How now, dame Partlet, the hen,” he commenced to an old woman, his only attendant, one of those clever useful old bodies, who make a house more comfortable, and get through more work than half a score of your London bred servants; “Don’t you see I’ve company this morning. Bring us another ‘chalice for the nonce,’ and make the tea instanter. Now that old creature, Mr. Blount,” said he to me, “understands every thing I say to her from the motion of my lips; for she has been deaf as a post these two-and-forty years, ‘Heaven reward her for it!’ As for me, I have exhausted mine art and my lungs in trying to make her hear. What the devil are you at?” he roared to the old dame, who, heeding him no more than if he had been a post, indeed, blew up the fire. “What the devil are ye at? ‘All the plagues of Sycorax, toads, beetles, bats, light on you!’ What’s all this trouble to make ‘fire burn and kettle bubble?’ Come, Mr. Blount, here’s eggs, ham, tongues and fowls; tea, coffee, chocolate and half a dozen things beside. So to breakfast with what appetite you may; ‘avaunt

and quit the presence Sycorax,' 'plod away on the hoof,' 'seek shelter, pack.' Kick all these freckled whelps out before ye, and give 'em some breakfast too."

The dogs, who seemed to understand their master as well as the old dame, trotted out with her, and we were left to the pleasure of our meal.

"It is not often," said the Doctor, "that I am honoured with the company of a guest, either at breakfast, dinner, or supper, Mr. Blount; but as I told you just now, I have taken rather a liking to you; I know not wherefore, except that you do not look happy or prosperous in this 'wide and universal theatre.' You are the only exact personification of the Master of Ravenswood I ever saw in life. Take some more cream to your coffee; and had you but a coal-heaver's hat on your head, and a bottle green tunic on your body, as you sit there opposite me, I should fancy myself that old hen-pecked sneak-cap, the Lord-keeper, taking my breakfast in the tower of Wolf's Craig. Come, you must eat that chicken, and those eggs, and that bacon. Hand me your cup, and leave the 'berry bitch,' for the tea-pot. No, it's not often

that I allow myself to be intruded upon ; and my Duenna here, Rodriguez de Grigalon, has orders to deny me to all comers during my meals."

" But," I said, " suppose it to be an accident, where a few minutes gained might save the life of the patient ; or a fit of apoplexy or something of that sort."

" Well, Sir, what then ?" returned the Doctor, " what then, ' fore me this fellow speaks, ' what's that to me, Sir. There's Doctor Stirrit t'other side the way, let him try his skill."

" But he may be out," I said.

" And am I to put myself," he answered, " in the very situation of the knave who has sent for me, and fall down in a fit of that same 'whoreson apoplex' described by Galen, and under which the patient is lying, (a wholesome example, a sort of *memento mori*), by being hurried out of my parlour here, *vino ciboque gravatus*. Not I, believe me ; I am an old and infirm man myself, Mr. Blount, and have spent the better part of my life in foreign climes. No, no ; I have no objection to do my best, as far as in me lies to benefit my neighbours ; but if they will dig their graves with their teeth,

I cannot help it. Well, and so if you will not take anything more, we'll have half an hour's chat before we pay a visit to the Hall. You seem a favourite, Mr. Blount, with the good old dame whose countenance, according to your own shewing, you have so injured. Are your elegant friends yonder, relatives as well as admirers of yours? Excuse me, but what great ones do, the less will prattle of. You are not altogether unknown to me by name, and your reputation is gone rather like a jolting hackney coach, (as Sancho has it), and been tossed about like a tennis-ball. I expected to find in Mr. Blount, instead of a quiet unassuming young fellow, an imperious, haughty, overbearing puppy."

"Except," I replied, "by some youths of my own age, and whom I have met in the hunting field, I am not known to many persons in the immediate neighbourhood. My father lives a very secluded life."

"That's wondrous pitiful," said the Doctor, "in every sense; and, perhaps, you are thought to set yourself above your neighbours hereabouts, on account of the oldness of your Norman shield; however, I cannot say you

experience much loss, as society is constituted now-a-days. As for me, all I ask of the world is to avoid me; to say of me what they like, but leave me to enjoy my hours of my idleness without interruption.—

Give me but my hollow tree,  
My crust of bread and liberty.

“Here I am, as you see, with my farm, which estate being left me by a relative, was the cause of my exchanging. Here I am, with my goats, as that capricious poet Ovid was amongst the Goths, ‘content with my own harm; glad of other men’s good, and the greatest of my pride is, to see my ewes graze, and my lambs suck.’”

“‘Such an one is a natural philosopher,’” I added, from the same play; and the Doctor who found in me a kindred spirit, and one who was nearly his match in knowledge of the Bard, grew more and more pleased with me as a *bon camarado*.

“Come,” said he, “you are a misrepresented and misunderstood youth. It is I who must patronize and bring you out here.”

In short, the eccentric manners and pleasant

society of this good man made a great impression upon me; and I laughed and chatted with him with the greatest delight. Though ever and anon, the statement I was sure that caitiff poacher would make, when brought before a magistrate for his attempt at shooting me, and the unlucky accident which happened in consequence, would seize me like some sudden pain, and breaking the career of laughter with a sigh, spoil the enjoyment of the hour.

So sharp an observer as my host, could not fail to perceive a mind ill at ease.

"Halloo!" said he, at last, "what the devil's wrong with you? 'Love on windy cholic.' Why you change from Gray to Gay, from swipes to wine. Does the coffee pinch you? or is your 'mind diseased,' eh?"

It was not often that I had an opportunity of making a friend; here I found a man whose soul I could read in a moment. Under an exterior of much oddity and eccentricity, some roughness of manner, he possessed a disposition gentle as Zephyr; but directly the reverse, where he found rude treatment or worthless customers. To this new friend my heart warmed, and before I had left his hospita-

ble table, I told him all my mishaps, and all my story. The doctor was a good deal puzzled at the account.

“ There was a mixture of good and ill in my conduct,” he said ; “ but how I was to get through it all, and achieve the lady, it puzzled him to fathom. Here is a mine about to burst, if it has not already blown up,” said he, “ that will hoist you into the air to begin with, and I suppose you know that if you mean to carry this lady off, it must be over the prostrate carcase of her other admirer. ‘ Not to flatter ye, you have as clear a case of battery as heart can wish ;’ but come what may, I am your friend, so long as you carry yourself uprightly. You are a good youth : I knew as much from the first glance, and I wish your credentials from the Horse-guards were arrived, and you yourself was fairly out of this neighbourhood.”

## CHAPTER XV.

You've read Shikspur, my Lady ?

Never, my Lord Dake.

O', I love Shikspur.

Ah, well I'll read him some wet artemoon.

*Actor's version of " HIGH LIFE BELOW STAIRS."*

" AND now, Mr. Blount," said the worthy Doctor, rising, " for the next three hours I must leave you. Stay here and read Galen and Paracelsus, or anything else you can find on those book-shelves to amuse you ; ' or in pure melancholy and troubled brain ' wander over my farm ; or view the wonders of the village ; or, in fact, amuse yourself as best seemeth to yourself ; only promise me to be present here again when my dinner is upon table, and which I shall give orders for, if agreeable, at five o'the clock."

Having accepted the good man's invitation, he called for his nag, in order to proceed on



his visit to the Hall, and I accompanied him into the stable-yard, to see him mount.

His horse was brought out by a queer-looking, nondescript animal, who officiated as groom and gardener, making also an occasional and vastly awkward footman. A short, square built, ill-favoured fellow, with Herculean proportions, and a most infantine countenance ; with cheeks puffed out as if he carried two eighteen pound shots, by way of plumpers, and a colour in them deep as a peonei. There was evidently between master and man a deep-seated feud, and consequent continued state of hostility. They looked daggers at each other, as the old gentleman prepared to mount.

"Mr. Blount," said he, as he climbed with some difficulty into the saddle, "don't forget five o'clock. You, Sir, Mister Frederick, attend in the house to-day : I've company."

"Wh-wh-Why, Zur," answered the gardener, with a Yorkshire accent, and an extraordinary stutter, "I've three hosses, four cows, besides the pigs at yard. Wh-wh-Why, how can I come in at house?"

"Why, why, why," iterated the Doctor, "let

the cows take care of the horses, dolt, and the pigs can amuse each other."

"O de-ear, O dear!" stuttered the serving-man, "I can't abide waiting at teable, Zur."

"There, don't stand whoying and stuttering, like a hog in a high wind," said the Doctor, "but let go my horse's rein, and get out of the road."

"I bean't to wait at teable, Zur; be I?" said the gardener, resolutely keeping his ground.

"Yes, I tell you, blockhead," returned the Doctor; "you be—"

"Then dang me if I do it," stammered the servant; "O de-ear, I'm sure on't."

"Saw you ever the like of that," said the Doctor, turning to me, "here's a fellow, with a stipend and a livery cloak, thinks himself too good to serve ritt-master, Dugald Dalgetty, of Drumthwacket; quit the presence, hound," said he, addressing the groom, "either obey, or leave my service—you're the most ill-conditioned scoundrel in all Illyria!"

Wh-wh-why, then, I'm sorry I ever came into it," returned the gardener, leaving his hold upon his master's rein, and stepping aside;

"I'm no scoundrel: pay me my wages, and I'll go—"

"Clear the course," said the Doctor, clapping spurs to his horse, and almost capsizing his serving-man, by way of finale to the dispute, as he galloped off.

The serving-man felt discomfited and enraged. He stood looking after his master, his cheeks purple with rage; one arm a-kimbo, and his other hand pointing like a tea-kettle spout, and sputtering forth imprecations and threats, like that vessel when operated upon by a boiling heat.

After giving vent to a portion of his wrath, he turned and glanced at me from head to heel, with a look of the most concentrated contempt; and then betaking himself to the garden, he commenced digging with fearful energy. Not a little amused at this pair of oddities, I returned into the house; and after passing a quiet half hour in looking over the Doctor's collection of prints, I then strolled to the little village hotel, where I had borrowed the unlucky guitar.

The fair owner of the instrument was profuse in her congratulations on my escape; the news

of the adventure having reached her with the usual exaggeration of circumstance. The culprit too, I heard, had been lodged in the stronghold of the village; and after whiling away another hour at the inn, I proceeded to make my way to Marston Hall. I found Miss Villeroy in a monstrous flutter. She had just received a letter from the Duchess of Hurricane, who was on her way to Marston from Scotland. The Earl of Moreton was also expected to arrive that day.

What with the unlucky accident which had happened, and the expected arrival of her visitors, she appeared excited and constrained in manner. She stood in great awe of her stately relative, the Duchess; and I thought I could perceive a sort of secret dread of being chidden about the familiar footing I was upon in the family. It has ever been my nature's plague to spy into abuses; and oft my jealousy shaped faults which were not. With some hauteur I arose to take my leave.

Miss Villeroy saw that I was offended. She rose from her seat, and presented me her hand.

"Do not leave me thus," she said; "I am unwell to-day. Last night's accident, and con-

sequent want of rest has unnerved me ; when I have laid down for an hour or two, I shall recover. Meanwhile, remain here till Dr. Misaubin has seen his patient, and write me a copy of the serenade which has caused all this flurry for my album."

I carried her hand to my lips, and she left the room.

For some minutes I paced up and down the apartment, in a state of mind by no means enviable, angry with myself, and out of sorts with all the world.

Alas ! how slight a cause may move  
Dissension between hearts that love :

—that one cool reception had blown half my love to heaven.

I threw myself into a chair, and took pen in hand to write a copy of the serenade. I was at least ten minutes in getting through one line, whilst the paper I wrote on was scrawled all over with caricatures and hieroglyphics, and covered with unseemly blots.

"Master Ratcliffe Blount," said I to myself, "thou art an interloper here ; your favour begins to warp at Marston."

I looked around me as I philosophized upon

the matter, and questioned the propriety of allowing my passion, for the fair occupier of these halls of dazzling light, to beat down the sense of pride and independence I had hitherto encouraged.

My thoughts recurred to Lady Constance de Clifford. Would this have been the case if I had sought her love! No! that noble spirit would scarce have been so evidently afraid to own the feelings of her heart.—The usual violence of my feelings came upon me, and I resolved to write a farewell epistle Miss Villeroy, and quit the neighbourhood for ever. Seizing my pen, I finished my verse, and commenced my letter. It was, however, much easier to begin than to finish to my own satisfaction. It was like the clown's letter to his sweetheart, in which, with all his invention, he could get no further than, "My dear Molly."

I arose and promenaded the apartment; that noble old room into which I had been first introduced when I came in such trepidation to Marston.

It was indeed a splendid apartment. The ample window shutters bore the household coat on their panels. The elaborately carved mantel-piece, on which the cunning artists of

old had exhausted their skill, might have adorned a regal palace. I remembered how often of late I had passed my time in that room, listening to the dulcet tones of its unmatchable owner. Is all the council, methought, that we two have shared—the hours that we have spent

When we have chid the hasty-footed time,  
For parting us—O, and is all forgot.

With Lady de Clifford, too, I had here spent many a brilliant hour; here had we laughed with Touchstone; sighed o'er the deep sorrows of the Moor; moralized with Jacques, and envied the banished Duke and his exiled brothers their hunter life, their trees, their running brooks, and their sequestered banquet in the forest glade. To write my farewell epistle was impossible; I therefore tore it in pieces, and gave it to the winds, leaving my verses in its stead on Miss Villeroy's open writing-case.

Time had flown while I had lingered here. It was evident Miss Villeroy did not wish to see me again, on that day at least.

“What, oh!—within there who waits?” I said, with a theatrical air, and a strut, as I

threw open the door; "will you inform Dr. Misaubin, I await him here?"

"The Doctor has been gone this hour, Sir," said the servant.

Looking at my watch, I found that it approached the hour I was invited forth to dinner. I, therefore, called for my steed and took my departure from Marston.

Passing out through the ample Hall, I paused to contemplate the richness and beauty of the park-like scene before me. 'Twas the scene of my departing joys, I felt. A something whispered to me, as I looked along the dark avenue, with the deer lying clustered in the long grass, that my last visit had been paid at Marston. The feeling was not a pleasant one; I threw myself on the soft moss beneath one of the trees, and lay and contemplated the distant building.

Whilst I reclined, the sound of horses' hoofs disturbed the deep solitude of the place. The herded deer started up, and bounded into the open chace, and the next minute two horsemen galloped rapidly past me, and alighted at the hall.

The shade of the tree I reclined beneath,



hid me from their view ; but as they passed, I thought I recognised in one of the cavaliers, my rival, Lord Hardenbrass.

The recognition was not calculated to add to my comfort. I arose, and mounting my steed, took my way towards the village of Woodville, as if an evil spirit had possessed me. Arriving at Woodville, I found the good physician dozing in his easy chair, with spectacles on nose, and his favourite author on his knee.

“You come most carefully upon your hour,” said he, starting up, “and I am glad on’t. I like punctuality in men, particularly in young men. Blow upon that pipe beside you, and we will have the eatables instanter.”

The pipe he mentioned, was apparently belonging to a bagpipe, and I afterwards found that it was a relic of the highland regiment to which he had belonged. It sent forth a shrieking note, and was promptly answered (somewhat to my surprise) by the offending groom, Frederick Elliot, now dressed to the level of the Doctor’s dining-room. He wore a green Jerry Hawthorn coat, and a countryman’s red figured waistcoat, buckskin knee-breeches, clean white stockings, and

his usual heavy hob-nailed boots, which had apparently gone through the operation of a hasty wipe over, with a greasy dish-cloth; so that with feet thus encased, he made as much noise, in his progress from parlour to kitchen, as if the statue of Don Giovanni, or one of his master's cart-horses was plodding up and down stairs. I expressed my satisfaction to the Doctor, that his man had thought twice on the subject of quitting so good a place, and doubtless had apologized for his behaviour.

"Who apologize?" said he, laughing; "not that scoundrel Elliot. He would be torn with wild horses first. He has quarrelled with me morning and night, any time these five years that fellow. We perfectly detest each other but the idea of parting never enters either of our heads. I have persuaded the drunken scoundrel, that he would starve in a week, if he was to leave me, and he stays here in his own despite. As for me, I could no more exist without him than I could without my bottle of black-strap after dinner. We have given each other warning any morning these seven years. Here the wretch comes, clattering up stairs like the Festein de Pierre. Now, mark him, he'll spoil the

look of as good a dinner, as the Clarendon would turn out, by placing it on the table ill-favouredly. However, behave as he will, he'll not get me to dispute with him till it's over, that's a rule ; we tiff it only morning and night."

Mine host offered no empty boast, when he affirmed that the repast he had provided was as good and neat a turn out, as the Clarendon could have sent up. Whatever means the old housekeeper possessed in the regions below, whether she employed man or woman cook I know not ; but, for well-seasoned and accurately-dressed viands, I think the Doctor's table could have vied with that of the most fastidious epicures in the kingdom.

"It was one of his weaknesses," he said, "to see a dinner daily served up, which would have satisfied the eye of Justice Greedy himself. Still, he was no gourmand, but on the contrary, rather abstemious in his living. Barring a bottle of port a day, Monsieur Blount," said he, "I am not an indulger in the good things of life, and although I love to sit down to a well-filled board, (for both the one and the other, I have been used to find at mess from my youth upwards), yet, I seldom taste of

more than one dish, and only temperately of that. 'Fat paunches make lean pates,' as that wondrous writer of my idolatry hath it, and I quite agree with the man, who wrote some century and a half back, that he never sat down to a well-filled table, but he saw all the various diseases incident to "this piece of work man," lying perdue beside each seasoned dish of viands on the board. However, this is strange language wherewith to encourage a guest to eat, and more befitting the discourse of Don Pedro Positive, at the table of the chagrined governor of Barataria. You see, I am, notwithstanding my words, full of performance myself. Come, now that specimen of liveried lacqueys has carried his leaden heels out of the room, and descended for the pippins and cheese, we'll have another glass of champagne.—Here's to the grace and ornament of female society; the beauty of the county, (we'll no names); the radiant and unmatched; the Olivia of Yorkshire!—Ah! Sir Blount, what a creature is there! I have looked upon the world these three-score and ten years, and I never saw so exquisitely beautiful a woman, as the one we drink to. She is the only personation in figure, face, grace, and

appointments, to the Olivia of Shakspeare, I ever beheld. I thought, with Duke Orsino (when she entered the room at Marston Hall this morning)—‘now heaven walks on earth!’ Come, don’t be sad and silent, the moment I begin to praise the goddess of your idolatry: let us turn the conversation. Sound the pipe beside you, and refresh the memory of that beef-head, Elliot. Ah! Shakspeare, Shakspeare,” he continued, “what a god-like creature thou must have been. Shakspeare, Mr. Blount, has been my only book for the last twenty years of my life; and no single day of my life, since I first opened his page, have I omitted to pay him a visit. I am altogether lost in astonishment at the extraordinary, the wonderful, and the (elsewhere) unheard-of. Never was there, Sir, so comprehensive a talent as that of Shakspeare. Rank, sex, age, king, hero, outlaw, idiot, murderer, soldier, sailor, monster, and ghost, all speak and act with equal reality. The distant age, and foreign nation, he brings before you so truly, that you live in another world as you read. The ancient Roman, the French and English in their wars, even the very walls they fought under, he alone has made as palpable to our

eyes, as if we had lived a former life, and been actors and participators in the stirring scene. 'Athens ripe for stroke' he pictures to the very life. The amiable Timon, too, banquetting in a marble palace, his lobbies filled with tendance, and sacrificial whisperings rained in his ear, is as happily described as the same man (disgusted at the society and friendship he has discerned to be 'merely poison') when naked and exposed in a wild and dismal forest, we find him scorning the yellow slave, and asking nothing (on this side the grave) but roots, 'Roots, ye clear heavens! earth yield me roots.'

Fear and piety,  
Religion to the gods, peace, justice, truth,  
Domestic awe, night-rest, and neighbourhood  
Instructions; manners, mysteries, and trade;  
Degrass, observances, customs, and laws,

"All and everything, this wondrous man talks as familiarly about 'as maids of thirteen do of puppy dogs.' Come, another cup of wine," continued the lively Doctor.

Do me right,  
And dub me knight  
Samingo.

"Is't not so? Why then, say an old man can do something. Clear all away," he called to his footman. and take thy face hence, servant, monster. And now, Mr. Blount, let's have your opinion of that port. By the mass, we'll crack a quart together. Ha!"

"Be I to bring in coffee and cigars now, Zur, or wait till you blows up," said the serving-man, opening the door, and putting his round perspiring head into the room.

"When I sound upon the pipe, dolt," said the Doctor; "and d'ye hear, let in the dogs, Blanch, Tray, and Sweetheart, and shut yourself out."

The old gentleman's bottle of port was excellent; when we had finished it, he called for coffee and cigars, and returned to his favourite subject, Shakspeare. For no other author, Mr. Blount," said he, "does one feel the inadequacy of language to find sufficient praise. I laud him 'with a powerless tongue;' but with a heart filled with unstained love; for what, Sir, can we say of one so wondrous, that no tongue but his own, no language but his own, can describe him?—

Hear him but reason on divinity,  
And all-admiring, with an inward wish,  
You would desire the Bard were made a prelate :  
Hear him debate of commonwealth affairs,  
You would say, it hath been all in all his study :  
List his discourse of war, and you shall hear  
A fearful battle, rendered you in music :  
Turn him to any cause of policy,  
The Gordian knot of it he will unloose,  
Familiar as his garter. When he speaks,  
The air, a chartered libertine, is still ;  
And the mute wonder lurketh in men's ears,  
To steal his sweet and honied sentences.

The Doctor was now fairly mounted upon his Pegasus, his hobby ; next to pottering about his farm, he loved to descant upon and talk scholarly and wisely of his favourite, Shakspeare.

"He is a Prometheus, Sir," he continued, "as some one somewhere says. He not only forms men, and in half a line shews us their dispositions, faults, virtues, nay, the very oddities of their manners ; in fact, brings us as intimately acquainted, as though we had been familiar with them ' from fourteen to fourscore, and upwards ;' and which I will maintain no other author has



effected, or could accomplish, in twenty set speeches; but he calls up the mighty dead, exhibits before us the midnight ghost of Danish ground, peoples the air with spirits, and makes the gentle sea breeze of a lovely and enchanted island steal over our ears, and fan us with the almost inaudible melody of unearthly music. He brings us again, in a single line, upon the comfortless and trackless wastes of Scotland, making the bleak winds kiss our cheek, as we march towards Fores; intercepts us with his unhallowed witches, and their infernal mysteries; and all these creatures of his imagination possess a truth and consistency, that we are convinced, had there been really such beings, and monsters, and spirits, they would have so spoken, and so conducted themselves. Then, for matters connected with these latter times, for once I agree with one of his commentators, that if, instead of bothering and puzzling their brains with politics, reading debates in both Houses of Parliament, or studying Burke or Tom Payne, men would content themselves with Coriolanus;—there will they find a whole library of political common-places.”

“You have doubtless seen,” I said, “most

of the great actors of your time, Dr. Mis-  
aubin?"

"There you are wrong in your supposition," he replied. "I never was fond of 'sitting at a play.' Nay more, I never was at above three plays in my life; and for this reason,—I once went to see *Macbeth*. It was the first play I had ever witnessed;—need I say I was utterly disgusted. I went, Sir, to observe, and actually expecting to see, a poor spindle-shank'd and macerated actor look like the man who had encountered the weird sisters. I forgot I was going to Covent Garden, and actually expected to see the heath at Fores. After this, I resolved never again to see a play; at least, never to witness the performance, so called, of one of Shakspeare's plays. I was, however, beguiled again, and went to see '*As you like it*.' Oh, Sir, 'for Shakspeare's sake,' never put yourself in a situation to have your imaginings on the knowledge and perusal of that play, destroyed. Never disenchant the forest of Arden! No, Mr. Blount, I have no objection to Filch picking pockets in the '*Beggar's Opera*;' but I hope never to see the weird sisters,—those 'secret black, and midnight hags,' whose very first

encounter with Macbeth spell-bound him and swayed his destiny, represented by two or three ill-looking scene-shifters, wretchedly ill furnished with red rags, shreds and patches, and as many stable-brooms to horse upon. I have no dislike to theatrical representation in general, and can see the productions of other authors with pleasure;—nay, I have been greatly amused by witnessing those poor devil performances at our country fairs. I saw ‘*Virginus*’ at our fair here, a couple of months back; nay, Appius Claudius dined with me in this very apartment, and died in the room above stairs.”

“Indeed!” said I: “that was singular.”

“You must know, Sir,” continued the Doctor, “that one of these booths was a penny theatre; and I was especially struck with the utter misery of the whole company, as they played their parts upon the platform, in order to beguile the audience into their tent. I could have advised them to turn melancholy forth to funerals; but I saw they lacked not only the attributes of actors, but were many days in arrear of a meal; they lack’d the *vis vitæ*. Nothing, indeed, could be more mirthless than the sickly smiles of Monsieur Merryman, and

the want of alacrity of the harlequin. Wondering at these 'faint stars,' I entered and witnessed the performance. Appius Claudius was performed by the principal tragedian. This Roman wore a garb quite different from what we have been used to see, or hear of, as the costume of the descendants or countrymen of Romulus and Remus. He was dressed in a ploughman's Sunday waistcoat, (none of the newest or cleanest), a world too wide for his emaciated body. On his postique parts he wore the cast-off knee breeches of a footman, and his toes were visible through his well-worn pumps. He had but one eye, the socket of the other being scantily covered by a few straggling hairs, combed down from his wig. The wig itself was a study for an artist, if, indeed, it was a wig, for in appearance it much more resembled the corner torn from a well-trodden door-mat. Appius Claudius was certainly dying, and I saw it. On the following day the fair was over. Whilst the company of the caravan made their preparatory arrangements for their march, I fell in with them on the common, and was asked to step into their booth, and look on the principal performer.

who was suffering from the previous day's exertion. In Appius Claudius I found one whom I had formerly known well, and served with in foreign lands. He had been promoted in a regiment of the line for merit; and had risen from the ranks to an ensigncy. Yes, Sir, he was one of those instances, showing how seldom promotion of this sort, to the rank of a commissioned officer, is of real benefit to the individual soldier in our service. Appius Claudius was a brave man, (we'll still call him by his Roman name, if you please, Mr. Blount),—and till he became serjeant-major had conducted himself with so much credit and renown, that no man in the service was better thought of. But when he once attained the 'topmost round of Fortune's ladder,' he began to scorn 'the base degrees by which he did ascend.' It is strange, but not singular in such cases, that Appius Claudius, like his namesake, was a tyrant to, and an oppressor of those beneath him, and arrogant and unbearable to the officers with whom he had been promoted. I was in that dreadful retreat to Corunna with him. We both served in the same regiment; that regiment in which he before had 'trailed

the puissant pike.' A better soldier in battle or in hardship never stepped; but in quarters he was not endurable; and ultimately lost his commission. He turned duellist, Sir, and became a perfect nuisance in the corps. Not only was he pugnacious himself, but the cause of serious disturbance and eternal quarrel amongst others. When I tell you that in several of these encounters, the wife of Claudius was the acting and exciting cause, you will conceive, Sir, that lady to have been as lovely as the virgin for whose possession the Roman Appius went such unwarrantable lengths.

"Exactly so," said I.

"Sir, 'twas no such thing; for the spouse of our Appius was nearly as hideous as that Asturian wench of Cervantes, who distilled vermilion with one eye, and brimstone with the other. She had been promoted together with her husband; he having married her at Portsmouth, when a private, and affronted the whole grenadier company by such appropriation and monopoly. The station she attained to it was difficult for her to fill with propriety, and consequently the husband was eternally embroiled. She was 'an Até stir-

ring him to blood and strife ;' and her children being brought up in the style which you may observe characterizing the offspring of some squalid artificer of a manufacturing town, were objects of abhorrence to the whole barrack: One eternal cause of complaint against the wife of Claudius was, that continuing to practise, as heretofore, the art of purifying her husband's, her own, and her children's apparel, this fair *blanchisseuse* would (despite the order of the commanding officer) hang the various articles of male and female apparel, in the passages of the barracks near her rooms. These things, therefore, which, in the time of service, were sometimes omitted to be noticed or rectified, became crying nuisances in decent quarters ; and at length so thoroughly embroiled her husband, that he deservedly lost his commission. Our indulgent Commander-in-Chief permitted him, however, to sell out, and with this money he entered into the publican business. 'Twas a life more suited to his taste ; and for a time he wielded the spiggot with success. His wife, however, drank up all the spirits, liquors and profits : so to drown reflection, he took to drinking himself, until at last, he came to the situation in which I found

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him. In fine, I took compassion on my sometime companion in arms, whom I should never have recognised in the wreck before me, had he not made himself known, and I had him conveyed to my house here. I also did what I could for the *dramatis personæ* of the "waggon of the company of death." He rallied, for a few days, under my care, but at last sank like one of the flickering footlights of his own theatre. And now, Mr. Blount, govern me the vantages of the pipe before you, and sound out that we are ready for tea, since I perceive your chalice has been unfilled the whole time I have been telling this long-winded story."



## CHAPTER XVI.

*Benvolio*.—By my head, here come the Capulets.

*Mercutio*.—By my heel, I care not.

*Tybalt*.—Gentlemen, good den; a word with one of you.

*Mercutio*.—And but one word with one of us? Couplet it with something; make it a word and a blow.

SHAKSPERE.

THE flourish I gave upon the instrument was answered by a reveille upon the street-door. The old gentleman started, turned his head, and set his wine-glass upon the table, whilst the olive which he was about to wash down with it, stuck in his throat like the ‘amen’ of his favourite Thane.

“I’ll not be interrupted to-night,” said he, sharply. “I’ll not be molested in my retirement,—in the lovelinesss of my private life,—in my *otium cum dignitate*: no; not if the

Mayor of Grimsby be taken ill. Oh! if that Yorkshire Tyke dare to say I am accessible, I'll have his stupid brains beaten out with billets."

The serving-man, however, seemed either not to stand in proper awe of his master, or the new comer was not to be denied; for, after a considerable altercation without, he entered the room and announced that some one wanted to see  
"At Doctor, oh dear, he was sure on't!"

"You caitiff, how came you to say I was at home," croaked his master.

"A' know'd a' was at whoam, a' said;" returned the serving-man.

"What kind of a thing is it?" inquired the suffering Esculapius.

"Why!—why!—why!—it's a mon."

"It's a man, is it?" said the Doctor, with the calmness of concentrated rage. "A south fore rot ye! What manner of man, servant monster?"

"Why, why, I told 'e it was a mon. Oh dear I'm sure I did," returned the irritable footman.

"What height, Chops?" said his master setting his teeth in rage.

"Why!—why—a 'tall thin mon, about t'height of that chop there, or mayhap bigger," answered the servant, pointing to me.

"What face, dolt?" asked the other.

"Why! why!—a feace like his'n too," returned the servant, "only he have a gotten as much hair under his nose as above it. Ha! ha!—oh dear, I'm sure on't."

"What kind of eyes, thou clay-brained guts?" said the Doctor.

"Why, he squints" returned his man, "like a picture; always seems a looking at yer, and never is."

"What has he on his head, thou knotty-pated fool?"

"Why, his hat, to be sure," answered the man, sharply. "Now, don't'e call I such dreadful names, Zur, doan't."

"Round his neck?" continued the Doctor, quickly.

"A black shiny handkerchief."

"On his legs?" said the Doctor, rising from his seat.

"Why,—why, I can't tell every thing the mon have a gotten. Mayhap it's boots, mayhap it's shoes."

With Tarquin strides, and bent nearly double, did Doctor Machaon Misaubin make the half circle of his dining-table, and approaching on tiptoe the closed door, applied his eye to the keyhole, in order to reconnoitre this pest and disturber of his comfort.

"Son of Atropos ! I know thee now," said he, as he drew himself up from his doubled-up position, and came to the right about, like a soldier upon parade. "This is what I expected but it hath come upon us somewhat of the soonest. Mr. Blount, there is a hero yonder. The man I know, and from the tale you have told me this morning, I suspect his errand. I shall not be called out to-night ;—Heaven send the same luck to you ! 'The day is hot, the Capulets abroad.' This visitor, and who I expected was some one of my tedious village patients, is the intimate of my Lord Hardens brass, a man with whom I am myself not on good terms. His visit here must therefore be to you. You, Sir Fieri Facias," said he to his servant ; "what made you say the gentleman without there asked for me, when he inquired for Mr. Blount ?"

"Why,—why, I said nothing o' th' sort," re-

turned Elliot. "He told I he know'd you were at hoame, and that he wanted to see Muster Ratcliffe Blount; and told I to give un his ticket. There a'be," he said, producing a card.

"Hand it here, you rustic mountaineer," said his incensed master. "This is the way you always behave."

The Doctor snatched the card, glanced at it, and handed it to me.

"Show the gentleman in here, sirrah," he said. "We are not obliged to suspect his errand, Mr. Blount."

The Doctor was indeed like the old war-horse. He sniffed the encounter, and he longed to be mixed up in it; moreover, he mistrusted my knowledge of the world, and wished to be at my elbow, in case the matter was serious, as he suspected.

The stranger entered the room, a tall gentlemanly looking person. He was evidently a military man, as his card had announced, and it was as easy to perceive, at a glance, that he belonged to the cavalry. The various branches of the service, to which men belong, are as easy to be distinguished by the initiated, as the fact of their being of the same profession. For instance, an

officer of marines is to be distinguished from line's-man in *mufti*, as easily as a line's-man from a foot-guardsmen. The lancer, I think, even also be distinguished from the hussar, the hussar from the heavy dragoon, and heavy dragoon from the life-guardsmen ; though not from any superiority in any one regiment for all are good alike, and unlike all other soldiers of all other countries.

Our visitor, in style and manner, was evidently an officer of cavalry ; and, as his name announced him, he was Major Belcour of the Hussars. He wore tremendous moustaches upon his upper lip, and the spurs upon his boots clattered as he strode into the room. He was upwards of six feet in height, broad at the shoulders, and wasp-like at the waist. His dress was the plainest of the plain, being a brown afternoon coat, buttoned up to the chin, and very dark trowsers ;—not a particle of linen visible, except about a quarter of an inch of wristband of his shirt. In feature he was extremely handsome ; and (but that he carried in his look an air of the most assured superiority and hauteur), he might have been called exceedingly agreeable and pleasing at first sight.

There was nothing of the military fop about him, as might have been observed in a cavalry officer of Austria, Prussia, or France ; but he showed, as indeed all high-bred military men in the British army invariably do, that in getting out of harness, he had entirely divested himself of the barrack, the guard-room, and the parade ; and that although *toujours soldat*, he was yet able to be the private gentleman at any time.

I rose to receive him. The Doctor, however, sat still in his chair, returned his bow haughtily, and desired him to be seated. The Major declined sitting down, and immediately entered upon his business.

“I am here, Mr. Blount,” said he, addressing me, “for I believe I am speaking to Mr. Ratcliffe Blount, of Wharncliffe Grange ?”

“You are quite right, Sir,” I answered ; “Blount is my name, the Grange my residence.”

“I am here, then, Mr. Blount,” resumed Major Belcour, “on an unpleasant business, which we had better discuss, perhaps, in private. Dr. Misaubin will favour us by permitting me

to hold a few minutes' conversation with you alone."

"By all means, gentlemen," said the Doctor, "make what use you please of my poor dwelling. Pipe all hands, Mr. Blount, for my scoundrel to take candles into the drawing room."

I thought I could perceive, by the old gentleman's manner, that he was disappointed.

"This gentleman, Major Belcour," I observed, "is my excellent and valued friend. Whatever business you may have to treat of may be freely discussed in his presence, as I indeed, have no secrets with which he has not been made acquainted."

"In that case, Sir," said the Major, sitting down, "I conceive he is your friend in this matter. I come here, on the part of Lord Hardenbrass, and doubt not that you have been for some time, in expectation of such a communication. If I am to understand Dr. Misaubin is to be your friend on this occasion, I can have no possible objection to his presence."

I was not prepared to say so much as that, as I had never thought upon the subject, but



the Doctor struck in to my assistance ;—" I am quite at Mr. Blount's service, Major," said he, "either as friend or physician. If the young gentleman will appoint me his adviser, I'll not baulk him. So now, out with your news, and let's have this horrid mystery and terrible grievance."

The Major gave an angry glance at him, as much as to say—"I know you for a troublesome customer, of old ;" and proceeded with his embassy.

"By desire of Lord Hardenbrass, then," said he, "I have to request the favour of your informing me (in the first instance), whether this document is acknowledged by you as your composition and handwriting?"

In saying this, he handed me a well-filled sheet of writing paper, gilt-edged, and lettered, in glancing at which I found these words, by way of a commencement :—

You sleep,—and o'er your slumbers light,  
May happy visions play ;  
And people thy soft dreams at night,  
With all the joys of day.

It was, indeed, the copy of my eternal sere-

nade, which I had written out, and left for Miss Villeroy that morning. I fancy I must have looked, as I felt, an egregious ass.

"You are, of course," continued the Major, "aware of the consequence of addressing such stanzas, as the one you hold in your hand, to the affianced bride of my friend. He has, therefore, desired me to inform you, that you must either discontinue your attentions in that quarter, or accept the alternative."

"My life as soon!" I returned. "These verses are mine;—except from their unworthiness, I glory in having written them; and unless desired by the lady herself not to do so, I will write a sonnet whenever the Muses will favour me with their assistance."

"I also will rhyme you so," said the Doctor, rubbing his hands with glee; "eight years together, dinner and supper, and sleeping hours excepted.—Psha! Major Belcour, you don't mean to say that you have paid us a visit this evening, to tell this young gentleman here, my friend, that he is not to profit by the gift of the Gods, (in making him poetical), unless you and Lord Hardenbrass choose to allow it?"

"I mean to say, Sir," returned the Major

drily, "that under the circumstances of the case, Mr. Blount has no right and title, to address such verse as this to the young lady in question. I mean to say, Sir, that having acknowledged to me what he has just now done, I request he will state whether or not I am correct in supposing *you* are the friend he wishes to act for him in this unpleasant affair, as Lord Hardenbrass is obliged to return to his regiment forthwith, having left it without leave, the moment he was informed what was doing in his absence here."

"You mean to say," said the Doctor, "'because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?' We'll try that question, Major; and although I deny the right of your principal to call out a gentleman upon these grounds, I have not served so long in the British army without knowing, that when a man is called out, he must go. Ergo, the sooner the better."

The old gentleman rose from his chair, and taking my arm, led me to the other end of the room.—"This is an ugly business," said he, "you'll be shot without benefit of clergy. Supposing, from your account this morning, that you have no acquaintance sufficiently experienced,

I have volunteered to be your friend. Lord Hardènbrass is a duellist, a duellist, Sir, 'a gentleman of the first house,' ah, 'the immortal passado, the punto reverso! the hay!' He's a crack shot, Mr. Blount, do you know anything of pistolling?"

"Not much," said I, "I never practised; but I can bring down a buck with a rifle ball."

"And Wat Tyler's mark, too, as Locksly hath it; I'm glad you have not practised. We're in the hands of Heaven, whether we are fighting the enemy, or perpetrating the duello. Bad as such transaction may be, "*nihil accidit sine ejus permissione*," as the school book saith. Leave me to arrange matters here. Say your prayers, and farewell; you'll sleep here to-night, and I shall have it entered upon to-morrow morning, if the arrangements are completed."

I squeezed the old man's hand, for this piece of kindness, which was, indeed, more than one in a hundred at his time of life would have offered, and left him to confer with the Major upon the subject.

A first duel is a somewhat serious business to a youngster, let him have as much nerve as

most men. For, although, unlike Bob Acres, we may fear little for our personal safety, the thought of going out quietly to execute, or be executed, without finding in the heart one particle of hatred, enmity, or ill-feeling towards our opponent, every moment increases our dislike to the business in hand. The duello, as it was even a few short years ago transacted, being fought with the weapon of our ancestors, the sword, then constantly worn, was in many cases the instant righter of the wrong; and was, perhaps, a much more pleasant matter to be engaged in; but the ceremony of being placed at stated distance to shoot vulgarly at an antagonist with a pistol, appears not fit for the settlement of the disputes of the gentry of Old England, and only suitable to bush rangers and savage Indians. "Ah, the immortal pasado, as the Doctor had it, the punto reverso! the hay!" those were the days.

What my thoughts were on this occasion, I do not now remember. I did not care much as it regarded myself; but still saw that I was fighting under every disadvantage. It would be highly disastrous for me to kill my antagonist; whilst I had reason to be pretty certain, that

he would not rest satisfied, till he had winged me at least—most likely indeed, from his excellence at his weapon, perforated my heart or lungs; and that, as Sir Brilliant Fashion has it, would be a scrape indeed. In fact, I saw no agreeable termination to the affair. It was a fog which I could not look through, therefore resolved to think no more about the matter in a few hours more, and it would be all over one way or other. In one thing I was fortunate, the Doctor was a knowing hand, and I considered myself extremely happy in having made the acquaintance of one so kind-hearted, and apparently so bold, that he dared in every thing to act exactly as he thought fit.

The Doctor, indeed, as I dare say the reader has by this time discovered, was no common person. He was a man whose style of life was much cavilled at by the common place. Some said he was an infidel, others pronounced him vulgar in manner, and coarse and abrupt in conversation; and except by the few, who really knew his sterling worth, he was considered an ill-bred, and even ill-tempered fellow. Mankind have indeed been forced to invent a kind of artificial humanity, which is what we express by

the word good-breeding. Few, moreover, except amongst the higher circles, have the slightest conception of the meaning of the term. With some of the county families, therefore, at whose houses the old gentleman chose to visit, he was a particular favourite; but amongst the lesser gentry, and the small fry of the village, he was as greatly disliked. Perhaps no man, with means so small, was a greater friend to the poor around him. He would at any time ride twenty miles to see a half-starved beggar, if really in danger, in preference to visiting a rich patient if slightly unwell. Of the poor also he always refused to take any recompense; nay, would send them clothing, wine, and other comforts, from his own home; yet strange to say, even amongst the poor, our doctor was not always a favourite, and well did he know he was not, though it never made him alter his conduct towards them. The poor, he told me, he had found proverbially ungrateful. Their lot was a sad one, hard toil and evil communication soured their dispositions, and hardened their hearts. Any thing beneath the grade of a substantial farmer was sure to be a churl.

'Twas strange, 'twas pitiful, but 'twas true.

The Doctor was in reality a man of great worth, notwithstanding the prejudice against him as a gentleman by birth, true to religion, and true to honour; he was also a scholar, and a soldier who had fought under the banners of the Great Duke, had been severely wounded in the hot East; endured fever and climate in the sugar islands of the West; gone through the toil of the Peninsular war, and in fact, had endured difficulties and hardships (which would have broken the spirit of many men), not only with fortitude, but with mirth and good humour.

Leaving the old gentleman's house, I desired the serving man, Elliot, to say that I would be in waiting at the village inn. There in the little sanded parlour I had the day before dined in I awaited him. How much methought had happened to me in the last few weeks of my existence!

I seemed to have suddenly grown old, and the freshness of my feeling to have left me. But the other day, my heart was buoyant with vigour, undepressed by care, and every scene gilded with pleasure and enjoyment. The sheep bell on the hills, the waterfall in the



valley, the distant watch dog, the cawing of the rookery—all and everything was regarded by me with delight. Now, however, I seemed no longer to find pleasure in my old, or look forward with satisfaction or hope in my new pursuits. That most fantastic of passions, which some one observes, can never be fully felt but once ; and when once felt can never be forgotten, possessed me wholly, and somehow or other seemed to have made shipwreck of all my enjoyment of life.

Whilst I ruminated, Doctor Misaubin arrived. “ Well, Sir,” said I, with something of the tone and manner of a man, who felt himself rather harshly treated by my Lady Fortune, “ how have you arranged this meeting ?”

“ You speak,” returned he, “ like one writ in sour misfortune’s page, and indifferent on the matter. The affair, Mr. Blount, is thus far arranged. I have fixed to-morrow morning at six o’clock for the time, and Fulbrook meadow on my farm for the place.”

“ Good,” I said, “ be it so ; and now let’s talk of something else.” After we had spent about an hour in conversation, we returned together

to his house ; and after having put his pistols in order, shewed me their make, and descanted on their virtues, (it being then late), he begged of me to retire, assuring me that he should himself remain up all night, and would call me before daylight in the morning.

END OF VOL. I.

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**THE**  
**SOLDIER OF FORTUNE.**

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**VOL. II.**



**BY HENRY CURLING, ESQ.**

**L O N D O N :**  
**RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.**  
**1843.**

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THE  
SOLDIER OF FORTUNE.

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CHAPTER I.

This gentleman,  
My very friend, hath got his mortal hurt  
In my behalf.

SHAKSPERE.

I THREW myself on the bed, and notwithstanding the unpleasant thoughts which intruded themselves, soon fell into a deep slumber, from which I did not awake until aroused by a rap at my chamber door, and the entrance of my host.

“Come,” said he, “I have allowed you to repose till the last moment; there is no time to spare. ‘The early village cock hath thrice done salutation to the morn.’”

I jumped out of bed immediately, thrust my head into the wash-hand basin, made a hasty toilette, and we sallied forth together.

In any other circumstances, I should have felt inclined to smile at our present equipage. Myself, at this early hour, brushing the dew from the grass, and *nolens volens* without a particle of ill-humour or hostile feeling, going out, a complete greenhorn, to fight a duel with a practised hand, under guidance and patronage of a village Esculapius, who looked old enough to be my grandfather! The said 'Great Medicine' enveloped in an old military cloak of blue cloth, ornamented with what had once been a red collar, arm-holes having been cut subsequent to its build, for the purpose of riding comfortably on horseback in it; a shocking bad foraging cap upon his head, which, being pulled down over his ears, and nearly meeting the beforesaid stand-up collar, left nothing visible of the wearer's features but his fiery proboscis, and an occasional sparkle of his brilliant eye. Thus equipped, then, and with his pistol-case under one arm and his gold-headed cane in his other hand, the worthy Doctor strode forth, and I followed him. Determination was in his step



as he hurried on, and in his own mind he doubtless felt that he was doing as praiseworthy an act in thus accompanying a greenhorn to the field, and acting as guardian, both of his honour and safety, by the knowledge he had acquired in buffeting about the world, as though he had been attending a sick patient gratis, relieving a lame mendicant, enduring an hour's infliction of the village parson's saw, or indeed, doing any other recognised good action.

The old gentleman, after crossing the lawn, let himself out at a small gate, which admitted him from his kitchen-garden into the meadows leading to his beloved farm. Even under present circumstances, he could not help rapping out sundry deep-mouthed curses against his incorrigible serving-man, Elliot, for not being up, and at his work with the sun.

We crossed the meadow adjoining, and entering a plantation of firs, proceeded along it, till we came upon the farm.

"Heaven's breath smells wooingly here: the air is delicate," said the Doctor, stopping, as we reached the appointed ground. "We are, you see, the first a-field, and down yonder at the home-stead, where you hear the cock crowing, there is as

yet no signs of the business of life. 'Man's o'er-laboured sense repairs itself by rest.' This is our ground, and right glad am I that we have reached it, for this cloak and these pistols have made me sweat like a day-labourer. Look out Mr. Blount!—pshaw! man, not in the direction we have just come. Look towards the road leading to Marston Hall; you've looked that way often enough before to-day, or we should scarcely be here at this hour, and on such an errand."

Saying this, the Doctor put down his pistol-case upon the grass, and quietly seating himself upon it, took out his cigar-case, struck a light, and proceeded to ignite his Havannah.

"Oh! solace of the wounded heart!" he began  
"my excellent cigar!—

Sublime tobacco, which from east to west,

Cheers the tar's labour, and the Turkman's rest."

Doubtless he would have treated himself and me to a whole litany upon his favourite weed, had I not announced that our opponents were approaching; and accordingly Lord Hardenbrass, and his friend Major Belcour, having dismounted, and secured their horses, quickly joined us.

A belt of firs hid the meadows in which we were from view of the road, so that the ground was well-chosen in all respects.

The Doctor, spectacles on nose, was busied in taking out and preparing his instruments, as they came up. Both raised their hats, and I returned their salutation. The old gentleman, however, merely bending his head, so as to get a glimpse at them over his glasses, bade them good morning, without discontinuing his employment. He was, perhaps, as good a specimen of what is termed 'a cool hand' as could well be met with. My opponent's second, meanwhile, produced and made ready his weapons, and we were then, without further circumstance, posted on our different stations, having the benefit of the usual allowance of paces between us.

Not a word, meanwhile, had been addressed by Lord Hardenbrass either to myself or friend. He was apparently, in his own conceit, too great, and too much injured, to honour either of us by giving even the salutation of the morn. He spoke a word or two to his second, after taking his ground, and looked me steadily in the face.

"Keep your eye firmly fixed upon him," whispered the Doctor, as he left my side.

The pistols were now in our hands, and we awaited the signal. It was quickly given, and we both fired. I believe I owe my life to my second's advice, and the unflinching look I kept upon my adversary's eye. His ball passed through my neck-handkerchief, and slightly wounded my neck, whilst mine went wide of the mark.

Major Belcour and Dr. Misaubin immediately approached. The former was desired by his principal, to ask me if I still intended to persevere in my attentions at the Hall. I denied him the right to propose the question.

"Give me the other pistol, Major Belcour," said his Lordship, "the affair must go on, I see."

"I see nothing of the sort, Major Belcour," said the Doctor. "I conceive Mr. Blount has given reasonable satisfaction here. An exchange of shots is all that was necessary in such a case. The field is as open for one candidate as the other. The affair, my Lord, permit me to suggest, with all deference, is now entirely out of your hands. The lady herself is the better per-

on to engage with, whichever of the swains she most affects. '*Utrum horum mavis accipe,*' as we used to say at Westminster."

"Your ideas upon the subject," returned his Lordship, with some warmth, "are as impertinent as you yourself are ungentlemanlike in mentioning the lady, as you have this moment done; for which you may consider yourself properly chastised, without my degrading myself by the infliction."

"Now, the red pestilence strike thee for an inordinate ass!" said the old gentleman, in violent rage. "By Heaven! you shall answer that affront, ere you leave this ground. Major Belzebub, your principal is unsatisfied, is he?"

"He is, Sir," returned the Major, haughtily.

"Take your weapon, Mr. Blount," said the Doctor, stepping to me, and handing the pistol. "I will indulge 'this courageous captain of compliments,' for once. I give the signal this time, Major Belcour. Ready. One, two, three," shouted the old man, without stirring a foot from my side, or giving his brother second time to get out of the way either.

Although this was not quite regular, we both obeyed the signal, fired, and again were

both unhurt. Again I owed the Doctor life.

"Are you touched this time," said he to me.  
"Come, it's lucky you are not."

"His Lordship insists upon going on," said the Major. "He is still unsatisfied."

"Is he, Sir?" returned the old gentleman, proceeding with alacrity, to load the pistol again. "Then, well may I,—as the poor Lieutenant of Sterne has it. He *shall* be indulged in another shot, Major Belcour," he continued soon as he had prepared the weapons; "but this time, if he shoot at all, it must be at me, Sir. I will not permit this youth here to be fired at, like a pigeon, for his peculiar satisfaction any longer. Mr. Blount," he continued turning to me, "a small exchange of civilities makes life pass agreeably, as my Lord Ogleb has it. Do you now perform that office for me which I have just done for you. Major Belcour, I expect satisfaction from that walking ferocity there, for the gratuitous insult he has just conferred upon me. I will not permit your principal to fire another shot at my friend 'that's the humour of it.' If you still continue his Lordship's second in this second business

place your man. Here is my ground ; I stand here for justice."

The Major and his friend consulted for a few minutes, and at length Lord Hardenbrass, taking his stand where he had before fired from, the doctor remaining upon my former station, we stepped aside, after agreeing upon the signal, which the Major this time gave, and duel number two proceeded.

Unhappily, both shots took effect, and quick almost as the reports of their weapons, both principals lay sprawling upon the greensward. I gazed for an instant with dismay from one to the other, and then hastening to Dr. Misbin, knelt down, and raised him in a sitting posture.

"My excellent young friend," said he, with difficulty, "I am fairly sped this bout. I have lost, and that soundly too."

I was so deadly shocked and confounded at this catastrophe and misfortune to my friend, that, indeed, I had begun to love with almost maternal affection, that I could scarcely speak to him ; and forgot, for the moment, that there was another sufferer on the ground, only a few paces from me.



"Let me down again," screamed the Doctor. "For Heaven's sake, lay me down easily. A curse upon the man, he has cut me in half! 'Is he gone, and hath nothing,' as Mercutio says. Oh, bullets and triggers, my back bone is broken in twain!" The pain was now so great, that together with loss of blood, he fainted in my arms.

"Help, Major Belcour, help," I cried, starting up, and running to him, "unless we get some assistance quickly, I fear my friend will die, if he is not already gone."

"We are in a scrape here," said the Major, who, on one knee, was supporting Lord Hardenbrass.—My friend is also, I fear, mortally wounded. Doctor Misaubin insisted last night, that no surgeon was necessary on the ground, as he himself was sufficient for the occasion; doubtless, little suspecting, that by becoming a principal himself, he would leave us in such a dilemma as this."

"Do me the favour to look in the direction of the farm, and see if you can observe any of the labourers about in the field."

As I could see no one near, he advised me to run immediately to the farm-yard, get assistance,



and at the same time dispatch a messenger for the village surgeon.

Accordingly I flew back to the Doctor, who I perceived was now recovering from his swoon, and placing his old cloak under his head by way of pillow, made off, fast as I could run towards the farm.

I flew like a Pawnee Indian across the fields, taking hedge and ditch in my progress, till I reached the farm-yard. With one bound I cleared the palings, and was seized by the Doctor's mastiff, which happened to be kennelled just on the spot where I alighted, and it required all my efforts to prevent him from throttling me. The fellow pistol to the one which Dr. Misaubin had fired with, was in my hand, which I was unconscious of, until I found myself defending my life with it against this powerful brute, by thrusting the barrel into his jaws. Despite my efforts, however, to get free from him, the faithful animal held me fast, and I found it impossible to extricate myself without destroying him.

Cocking, therefore, the pistol, I discharged it down his savage throat.

The noise of my encounter with the mastiff

aroused some of the labourers of the farm, who hastening to the spot, instantly surrounded me. Seeing their guardian in the agonies of death, and a man armed and looking wildly, rising conqueror from the encounter, they made at me with the weapons which they had snatched up on the alarm, and I found myself accordingly delivered from one action only to commence upon another. Assailing me with imprecation and blows, they would fain have beaten me to the earth first, and then inquired into the justice of such measure, after I was unable to explain the cause of my intrusion. It was in vain for me to cry out to them to desist. They out-tongued my complaints, and taking me I suppose, for a burglar or a mad man just escaped from his keepers, with a deadly weapon in his gripe, they seemed determined to make their capture in the safest way to themselves, by rendering me incapable of doing more mischief. Whilst I fought an unequal combat, therefore, and was upon the point of being overpowered by these rustic barbarians, the bailiff of the Doctor's villa, thrusting his rearing nightcap from the window, effected a cessation in the efforts of his ploughmen, and saved me

from the disgrace of being vanquished by the cudgels and pitchforks in their unknighly hands. Quickly explaining to the farmer, my reason for coming, and the dangerous situation of his master, after despatching a messenger for Dr. Stirret, we procured a mattress and blankets, and returned as fast as we could to the scene of the unhappy duel.

We found matters there bad enough. The Doctor was as severely wounded as he had at first proclaimed, and his agony was so great, that it was with difficulty we succeeded in placing him on the mattress we had brought. Lord Hardenbrass was also apparently mortally hurt. The ball having gone through his stomach, his second feared that he would die on the ground. With some trouble we managed to carry my poor friend, in a faintly state, to the farm-house. Lord Hardenbrass, however, refused to be conveyed any where but to the Hall. "I will perish," said he, "where I am, Major Belcour, or be conveyed to Marston Hall. Tell me not, Sir," he continued, "about assistance sent for to this man's farm. If I am doomed to die by the hand of a village apothecary, methinks the disgrace of such a duel is

quite infliction enough, without breathing my last breath under shelter of his roof. It was by your advice I consented to grant this person satisfaction, and behold the result."

"But, my dear Lord," urged the Major, "consider, it is merely till a conveyance can be sent for you; and, in order that your wound (which I trust is not so bad as you think) may be looked to as speedily as possible, that I ask it."

"Major Belcour," returned the wounded noble, "I beg, Sir, you will not further irritate me at this time. Favour me by either directing these men to convey me to Marston Hall, or send one of them off speedily for a carriage from the village of Woodville. Cursed misfortune," he continued, "to be thus pinked by a crack-brained surgeon of a country town! I could die, Major, with perfect satisfaction to myself, had I been cut down by the commonest trooper in the field; but to be thus brought low by an itinerant quacksalver! Oh, it's too ridiculous. It really almost makes me laugh to think of."

So saying, the noble Lord fell back into the arms of his second, in a violent fit of hysterical laughter, and fainted.

## CHAPTER II.

Oh, Romeo, Romeo, brave Mercutio's dead ;  
That gallant spirit hath aspir'd the clouds.

SHAKESPEARE.

It happened, luckily, that a post chaise, which Doctor Misaubin had arranged to have in the road that morning in case of accident, and which he had ordered from the Shin of Beef and Gridiron (as if for the purpose of conveying him on a visit of some distance to a patient), at this moment hove in sight, and I immediately informed Major Belcour of its approach. We, therefore, with the assistance of two or three of the gaping and affrighted bumpkins around, carried Lord Hardenbrass across the meadow into the road, and placing him in it, he was supported in the arms of his second, and conveyed gently towards the Hall.

As for me I felt, as usual, the chief agitator

and cause of this misery and bloodshed, and yet as it were, quite independent of it all. My best friend, who had apparently sprung up in the last few hours, as adviser and guardian to my future ill-omened career, was hurt almost to death in my cause, and my foe was in as bad a condition. It was no piece of good fortune, I considered, that the bullet of my antagonist had been directed from my own heart into the body of another; as I conceived it a most unlucky chance which had hindered the missile from ending the career of one so apparently useless and unlucky. I, the exciting cause, and by whose actions these disasters had come about, forlorn and miserable, seemed to have no more to do with them now all had happened, than the horned beast which quietly chewed the cud in the meadow beside me.

It was no little aggravation to my feelings, that a comparative stranger had taken my quarrel into his own hands, in spite of all my efforts to persuade him that he had nothing to do with its active part; and, had apparently because he had advocated my cause, been shot down at my feet, the moment he entered upon my quarrel. I felt that I was a culprit without crime, a fellow



by the hand of nature quoted and signed to be unfortunate in my career, and shed desolation upon all connected with me.

As I was left alone in the field, I walked off to the farm, in order to see after my unfortunate friend, whose wound I dreaded to hear a report of. Farmer Blackthorne had ordered him to be placed upon his own bed; and Doctor Stirret arriving just as I reached the cottage, proceeded to examine his hurt. It was one of those curious perforations which sometimes happen in gun-shot wounds. The ball had entered the right side, traversing round till it lodged upon the spine. The torture of such hurt is generally most excruciating, and the screams of the sufferer were so dreadful, as to drive me during the surgeon's examination from the room. Alas! I cannot bear to dwell upon the remembrance of my poor friend's suffering in my cause; suffice it, that from the time of the duel up to the hour of his death, I never left him.

For nearly a week his sufferings were dreadful, and the cries he uttered, day and night, still ring in my ears. They pierced me then like daggers driven into my own flesh; and

frequently in the dead of night methinks I hear them reproaching me, as it were, for being the cause of so good a man's suffering and death. At the end of five days a cessation of pain took place, and I consented to relinquish for a few hours, my post behind his pillow, thinking he was about to recover. Mortification, however, had taken place, and my poor friend died, when I imagined all my care was about to be rewarded with success. Both himself and his medical friend, knew that the cessation of suffering was but a short prelude to the ending of mortality.

As soon as he began to feel himself somewhat easier, his spirit and good humour returned, and during the night he called me to him, and told me that all would soon be over.

"Thou art a good youth," said he. "In my career of science, I have been used to read men rapidly, and have seldom been deceived. I will yield to no man, not even to the great Gustavus, the Lion of the North, in penetrating into the dispositions of mankind, from a few hours' acquaintance. The hurry of the march,—the toil of the war,—the misery of the hospital,—the imminent deadly breach,—the sufferance



under surgery;—all have taught me to know man well. You are a good youth, I repeat, and of a disposition too amiable to thrive in this world of rascality. Had I time, I would read you a sermon of advice; but I feel that I have not, and indeed it would be useless. O Heaven! that one might read the book of fate.'

How chances mock,

And changes fill the cup of alteration  
With divers liquors! O, if this were seen,  
The happiest youth,—viewing his progress through,  
What perils past, what crosses to ensue,—  
Would shut the book, and sit him down and die.

"In some sort I am prepared for death, and I die content, my dear young friend, that I have been able to preserve your life by my interference. You have relieved me too from a great weight, by saying that my antagonist is likely to recover. A little suffering will do that man good, and I am not sorry that I have chastised him a trifle. His intentions towards you I saw, were improper; it was 'miching Mallecho,' as Hamlet says; 'it meant mischief.'"

I remained with him as long as he breathed;

for the last few hours of his life he was motionless, and unable to speak. As his eye grew dim and glassy with the near approach of death, I saw it roll round the apartment and fix upon the water jug, so I arose and moistened his lips. He glanced at me to thank me, and then closing his eyes, soon afterwards ceased to breathe.

Besides myself, there was another individual who, half broken-hearted, watched the progress of the poor old gentleman's decease;—and that individual was his eccentric old gardener, Frederick Elliot. The calamity seemed to have completely unsettled his wits; and as soon as he heard of the dangerous state of his master, to whom, notwithstanding the warfare they had so long lived in, he bore the truest affection, he strode over to the farm-house, and walking into the kitchen, thrust himself into a chair between the dresser and a table, near the casement. Wedged in this place, he sat, and listened to the agonized screams of his master, in a state of absolute torture. In fact, he suffered with him he heard suffer; but nothing could persuade him to go into the room where he was dying.

In this frame of mind, the eccentric serving-man arrived every morning at day-break at the farm, and rushed home to the village late at night. He spoke little to any one, but echoed his master's groans, and took scarcely anything by way of food, but an occasional crust of bread, washed down with large draughts of farmer Blackthorne's strong ale; which the old dame, his wife, constantly supplied him with. When he ascertained that his master had breathed his last, he rose from his accustomed seat, seized upon the oaken clump with which he always walked abroad, and without a word to any one present, left the house, and returned to his old employment of digging in his garden.

Lord Hardenbrass, meanwhile, contrary to expectation, I found was recovering from his severe and dangerous wound, and (although the bullet had passed through his body) was pronounced by Dr. Stirret, for the present, out of danger. This was so far satisfactory to me; but the death-bed scene I had witnessed, and my incessant attendance upon my poor friend, completely knocked me up, and I suddenly found myself seriously unwell. My nerves, in-

deed, had received a severe shock; and at the end of a couple of days I was in the height of a violent fever.

During the violence of my malady I was for some time delirious, and unconscious of what passed; but with Dame Blackthorne's care, and Dr. Stirret's skill, I at length began to recover.

Much had in the meantime taken place, whilst I had been thus an inmate of Nonsuch Farm. My delinquency in having mistated the occurrence of Sir Walter Villeroy's death, was divulged by my evil genius the scoundrel poacher, greatly to the astonishment of Lord Marston, the grief of Miss Villeroy, and the delight of my opponent and rival.

The Duchess of Hurricane exulted in her penetration, as she averred that from the first moment of looking upon my unhappy visage, she had set it down in her own mind that I was good for nothing. There was something about me which, as Shallow says, she could "never away with," notwithstanding all my plausibility, hauteur, and (she was pleased to add) distinguished appearance.

The noble-hearted Lady de Clifford, how-

ver, as I afterwards learnt, remained fast my friend. She combatted the opinions of all my enemies, Mrs. Allworthy told me, during a visit which I subsequently paid that old lady. Nay, she had even sent each day, during my illness, to make inquiry after my health, setting at nought the offended dignity of her austere mamma.

"To me, Madam," she said, "he has rendered a service, for which I can never be sufficiently grateful. So much, indeed, do I owe to his gallantry in defending me from the most horrible of deaths, that I shall never be able to repay the obligation. Besides," she continued, "I know you are all quite wrong in your feeling towards this young man. None but the ill disposed themselves can really be the enemies of Mr. Blount when they know him. In my opinion, his generosity and fine feeling, his honour and chivalrous disposition, quite counterbalance the violence of his temper and his other faults."

The Duchess was highly indignant at these allies of her daughter, who she immediately began to suspect entertained feelings of partiality for one whom she defended so obstinately.

"Mrs. Allworthy must have been mad," she

muttered, as she left the room in search of that lady, "to have permitted this intimacy to grow, and through which all these disasters have happened."

The Duke, also, who was present at Marston during the illness of Lord Hardenbrass, decided, from all that had transpired, that I had neither truth nor honour; and the circumstance of my being, as he heard, disinherited, and expelled my father's roof, was quite enough for him. He desired his high-spirited daughter never again to mention my name in his presence.

Miss Villeroy, meanwhile, who had kept her chamber since this unlucky duel, and who had been persuaded by the Duchess and her two guardians to look upon me with abhorrence and dislike, as the virtual murderer of her beloved father, now signified her desire to leave the neighbourhood immediately, and travel abroad. Amidst the classic remains, and under the bright and sunny skies of Italy, therefore, she was persuaded to forget the mishaps and misfortunes of Ratcliffe Blount.

## CHAPTER III.

— As in the sweetest bud  
The eating canker dwells, so eating love  
Inhabits in the finest wits of all.

SHAKSPERE.

MISS ALLWORTHY I have not made much mention of since the unlucky serenade. From the circumstances attending that affair, the good old lady might with reason have entertained feelings of hostility towards me. The Duchess, indeed, had expressed her displeasure to her in no measured terms for having permitted the Lady de Clifford her daughter, and the heiress of Marston, to ride about the country in her absence, as she affirmed, more like the daughters of some homespun farmer than people of condition.

The poor old lady, who bore in her countenance the consequences of her error, if so it was, could ill brook the rebuke of her haughty rela-



tive; and telling the Duchess that her ideas were unbecoming one of her high rank, took leave of the party; and, bidding Miss Villeroy beware how she broke the heart of a worthy man, for the sake or at the bidding of a hot-headed colonel of dragoons, ordered her carriage, and returned home.

Whilst I remained at Nopsuch Farm, I received a letter from her, desiring to see me as soon as I found myself in travelling condition; and from her I learnt the matter I have just related. Dr. Stirret had also informed me, now that I was able to talk on matters of business, that my father and his party had set off for the continent about a fortnight after our disastrous field day. "To-morrow morning," said he, "I will talk further with, and give you some letters I have received here for you. This evening we have done as much as the state of your health will bear; meanwhile, I shall commend you to your repose."

Accordingly the next morning she delivered me a packet of letters, two of which had been brought for me from the Grange, two had come from Marston Hall, and one was an anonymous production. The two from the Grange were



important. One bore upon its envelope those (to a beginner) formidable-looking printed characters, '*On His Majesty's Service.*' The other was from my father. The Horse-guard epistle named me as recommended to his Majesty for a Cornetcy in the — Hussars; and the one from my father was an accompaniment thereto, ordering me to make my way up to London, to the house of a relative I had never seen, giving me likewise directions about my fit out, and orders to join at the expiration of the two months granted for preparation, without soliciting any more leave. The letter contained also a cheque for two hundred pounds, and signified his intention of being shortly in London. The letters from the Hall were, however, the first opened, as I knew the hand-writing of both. The first was from Miss Villeroy, and contained this passage:

"Indeed, after all that has transpired, I could not leave England without either seeing or writing to you. Heaven knows that before I discovered the dreadful truth regarding my poor father's death, I could have suffered all the

odium and displeasure of my relatives, rather than have caused you the slightest unhappiness ; but when to that discovery is added also the knowledge of your having professed to feel for my cousin the same sentiments of regard you so oft have sworn you felt towards me and me alone, how can I feel anything but sorrow for your treachery, and contempt for all mankind ! Believe me, I grieve for your situation, and know that this last unhappy business was not of your seeking. It was, however, the most unfortunate thing that could have happened. Much as I now feel dependent upon the advice and support of my relatives and guardian, I should have held fast to my promise to you but as the case now stands, I feel myself absolved from all, and have never dared to acquaint them that there has been more than friendship between us.

“ For ever, then, farewell ; and may you be blessed in life, and far happier than I can ever hope to be ! We shall never meet again, without my consent, in this world ; but that I can ever forget the man whom my fancy pictured and my thoughts loved to contemplate, is a vain wish ;

ay, I fear still that as your favourite song  
as it,

' I had rather bear whole years of pain,  
Than e'en for one short hour forget thee.' "

o

The one from Lady Constance ran some-  
thing thus:—

"I do not suppose that under any circum-  
stances I could be justified in thus writing.  
But the feeling I shall bear with me to other  
lands, from having done so, will be that of satis-  
faction, even though the universal world should  
censure. I go shortly with Miss Villeroy to  
Rome, at her particular request; though, she  
well knows, I have no great will to the journey.  
We may, perhaps, never meet again; but, oh!  
Mr. Blount, think not I can ever forget how  
deeply I am indebted to you, and greatly I feel  
the want of proper feeling towards you which  
exists amongst all here. The knowledge, too, that  
you have borne more than your proud spirit  
could brook for mine and Isabella's sake, merits  
both our thanks.

"Isabella has ever forborne to speak her  
sentiments, but I have discovered there has been

more between you than I knew of, ere I went to Scotland, which I would you had not thus concealed. But I will not here further touch upon the subject. I shall now, I fear, never hear of you, even slightly, as I used to do when you visited at the Hall during my absence; and now these unhappy events have happened, and we are to be so far away, I doubt not but that you will soon forget your sometime friends here. 'Twill be best so; and in the stirring events and amusements of man's career, it is, I hope, easy to do so. Not so with woman.—Farewell!"

It was evident to me, from these epistles, that the ladies had compared notes; and that the smart things I had felt it my duty to give utterance to whilst the companion of Lady Constance, had been misconstrued by Miss Villeroy; which, together with my delinquency in regard to her father's death, my unhappy serenade, and disastrous duel, had made shipwreck of all my present hopes. I had set a barrier between her and myself, over which, at present, there was no approach.

The anonymous production, however, was the

ne which most puzzled me. It was in a female hand, and breathed the most devoted attachment. As it alluded to passages which had lately passed at my own home, and blamed my new relation as driving me from my father's roof, it must have been written by some person well acquainted with our family affairs; but as I knew no one who could possibly be much interested about my welfare, I ceased to trouble myself with conjectures, and gave it to the flames.

## CHAPTER IV.

— He fishes, drinks, and wastes  
The lamps of night in revel.

SHAKSPERE.

A few days from the receipt of these letters I had bidden farewell to the few friends with whom I was on terms of intimacy, and was on my road by the York mail, towards the great metropolis. I felt an eager desire to be there; for a something whispered me, (one of those inexplicable feelings which sometimes visit us, as though with a certainty of correctness in the supposition,) that Miss Villeroy and her party were at that moment sojourning there. It was, indeed, not at all unlikely that London would be the first place at which they would make a halt before they set forth on their tour.

It was now just about the close of the Lon-

on season, the beginning of the month of August; a time when almost all the wealthy old country families, the daughters having been presented at Court, and gone a round of gaiety, in dinners, balls, routs, and revels, sufficient to pale the rose and deaden the lily of even their amask cheeks; and after having been initiated into the mysteries of fashionable life, (only to be acquired in this finishing school of *haut ton*,) whirled from visit to visit, from the festive board to the opera-box, and from the opera-box to the ball to "disperse themselves," and leaving bad air, sultry streets, and late hours, seek refuge in the "parks, and walks, and manors" they possess, in order to renovate their somewhat bated strength, in the woods and groves of the several counties to which they belong. Still, however, there is always a very decent sprinkling of fashionables even at this period in London. The cream of the cream of the aristocracy generally remain in town, and apparently enjoy each other's hospitality just after the full tide has a little subsided, more than when at high-water mark. Consequently, those few carriages now to be seen in the streets of the far west, bear mostly



on their panels the coronets of the ancient noblesse.

To me, London, with all its amusements, its vices, follies, and even its excellencies, was quite an unknown world. With my usual self-sufficiency, I chose to disobey my sire's instructions, and, instead of proceeding to the mansion of my relative in Portman Square, located myself at the first house of entertainment I arrived at, which was in Holborn, at the inn where the mail stopped.

I was, indeed, unfit at the present moment to enter upon strange society in a strange place. My feelings had been shocked, after being a participator and witness of such scenes as those I had lately been engaged in, and I felt it would take some time before I was reassured. After watching narrowly the bed of death, and seeing a dear friend at last die in my arms, for a time even the most careless of mortals must feel that "all the pleasures of the world, its cares, its anxieties, and its ambition, are naught; and that the only wise way to pass through life is to prepare for that hour, which will come, when it will come." I therefore ensconced myself in a comfortable little parlour



at the — inn, one of those old remains where you might suppose in former days some franklin from the weald of Kent, "having great charge," would take up his quarters. There I resolved to spend a few days, and amuse myself by viewing the wonders of that city, of which I had so often heard.

To those who have never seen this wonderful place, all is indeed full of interest, and I chose to take my own impression and view it by myself; trusting to chance in the direction I took, and the adventures I might meet with. It was pleasant, I thought, to a man in my circumstances to be totally unknown and unobserved in his peregrinations. Accordingly, after my rambles, it was my wont to thrust my feet into slippers, and seated in the little private room of this hostel, my window looking out upon the turmoil and bustle of the yard below, take my chop in as much contentment as the melancholy which at present pervaded my spirits, would allow of.

I allowed myself a week of this sort of quietude; and during that time saw all that a country cousin is usually shewn of the sights of London. But it was especially my de-

light to search out and explore those parts of the town not so often cared for by strangers; and although there is now but little to remind us of the doings of the fierce Norman nobles, and the warlike kings of the immortal Bard, yet still, it is something to haunt even the locality where Shakspeare's scenes are laid. Accordingly I made a journey to Eastcheap in the expectation of draining a cup at the Boar's Head, with as much devotion as if it was to have been actually tended me by the inimitable Francis himself. The Temple gardens too were full of interest, and I chose to regard them as when that brawl commenced, "'twixt wrangling Somerset, and fierce Plantagenet," which afterwards

Sent, between the red rose and the white,  
A thousand souls to death and deadly night.

The inns of court, too, where little John Doit of Staffordshire, black George Bare, Francis Pickbone, Will Squele the Cotswold man, and other "swinge-bucklers" used to daff the world aside, not forgetting Grays Inn, where Master Robert Shallow fought with one Sampson Stockfish the fruiterer; and where, as

he prophesied, "they talk of Mad Shallow yet." All these spots were hunted out, and viewed with peculiar delight.

It was after a day passed in thus wandering about the town, that, on returning home to my inn somewhat late, I was accosted by a stranger, who, standing beside the entrance of the yard, was apparently enjoying the fresh air, and watching the arrival of the coaches, as he smoked his cigar.

I had observed this person once or twice before in my peregrinations; and it appeared to me that, like myself, he was a stranger in town, and occupied pretty much in the same pursuits. I had seen him looking with great interest, apparently, about the old buildings of the Temple; had crossed his path in several other parts of the town; and, by a singular chance, had met him in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey, dogged his footsteps in Whitefriars, and nearly run against him once or twice in Hyde Park and St. James's Street. He was a genteel-looking man, apparently of the military profession. To his passing remark, as I entered the inn-yard, I felt myself obliged to make a civil reply, and we were soon engaged together

in conversation. It was, I found, just as I had surmised. Although not entirely a stranger in London, he informed me that he was taking the advantage of a short leave of absence from his regiment, to view those places of interest, which, on former visits to the metropolis, he had not seen. As we were thus engaged in similar pursuits, and lodged at the same inn, he proposed, after a short conversation, that we should take our chop together. I would willingly have been left to the indulgence of my own thoughts, but as he seemed a person of gentlemanly manners, I consented to his proposal, and we dined in my sitting room very cosily together.

He informed me during our meal that he was a captain in the Dragoon Guards; mentioned his name and regiment; that he had just come over from Ireland, where he had been lately stationed; and having visited his friends residing in Yorkshire, had run up to town on some urgent business, and intended to amuse himself for the remaining few days of his leave, by perusing the curiosities of London's famed city.

Of course I felt bound to throw off reserve

in the company of one so candid; and, in return, let him know so much of my affairs, as that I was myself a candidate for military honours; had arrived in town for the first time in my life, and intended to wait upon the Commander-in-chief, get myself fully accoutred, and then join my regiment. That I was named after my ancestors, and had resided hitherto in Yorkshire; adding thereto, that after I had rallied my spirits, and refreshed myself for a few days, I was due to some relations who resided in Portman Square.

The Captain was extremely delighted when he heard my name and residence in Yorkshire.

"This is, indeed, fortunate!" he exclaimed (starting up and seizing hold of my hand)—  
"my dear Sir, you and I ought to be well acquainted, for our fathers were old friends before us; and my relations live only two miles from the village of Foxholes-upon-the-Wold. You surely must have heard your father speak of Colonel Catchflat of Ganton Dale."

I could not at the moment tax my memory with either the name or the residence my new friend mentioned; but as I knew that my sire had dropped most of his early acquaintance, I

entertained no sort of doubt but that the son of one of his brother officers, when in the dragoon, was now before me. I felt, therefore, that I ought to be pleased with the circumstances which had thrown this polite gentleman in my way, and that every attention was due him.

It is true that his manners appeared to me to be rather free and easy ; but then, I considered they became one of his profession ; and being glad to meet a youth about to enter the army, he felt himself quite at home in his society. In short, I resolved to be delighted with everything about the Dragoon Guardsman, except his way of addressing his inferiors, and that I thought rather aggravated and unbecoming.

"How now, scoundrel!" said he, addressing the waiter, during our meal, "how dare you offer this gentleman, my friend here, Captain Blount, of Wharfedale Grange in Yorkshire, such b—d stuff as this Madeira? Pardon me, Captain Blount," he continued, addressing me, "for the liberty I am taking ; but it makes me angry when I see these rascals trying to impose upon a gentleman on his first coming to town. Begone, Sir," said he to the waiter, "and send



your master here instantly with a bottle out of bin No. 4 ; and, d'ye hear ? let us also have a couple of bottles of your very best champaign. D——, Sir, if I catch you playing any of your London tricks upon this gentleman, I will cane you as long as I can wield my weapon. Again I beg ten thousand pardons, Captain Blount ; but it makes me quite ill when I observe such attempts at imposition. You will allow me my way in managing these fellows whilst you stay here ; will you not ?”

“ Oh, dear Sir !” I exclaimed, “ be under no sort of restraint on my account ; cane the fellow to your heart's content ; if you find the wine not to your liking, and we will have a sample from every bin in the cellar, till we get at the knave landlord's oldest vintage.”

“ Ha ! ha !” said the Captain, “ bravo, Captain Blount. Come, I love a lad of spirit. 'Fore Heaven, we'll have a rouse on't to-night.”

I was indeed becoming not a little elated with the champaign, and the pleasure of finding a new friend of so agreeable a disposition ; and after the melancholy which had lately pervaded me, the re-action was proportionably great. In short, I was soon whistled drunk, as the saying

is, and proposed turning out about eleven o'clock for a regular spree in the streets of London.

The Captain hailed the idea with delight, and sallying forth from our hotel, we held a consultation as to the direction we were to proceed in. I was for exploring the back slums in the east, but my companion preferring to visit the more fashionable end of the town "westward, hoe!" was the word, and we began our career.

The first move of my new friend, soon after starting, was to utter a continuation of the most horrible and terrific shrieks as we proceeded, which he informed me (on my supposing he was seized with a fit of epilepsy, and asking him in the name of Heaven what was the matter) was for the purpose of assembling the Charlies, and letting them know that he was out for the night.

This was rather a new idea, I considered; but supposing it customary, I forthwith joined in the cry, and gave the view halloo till the streets rang again. Accordingly, upon reaching that part of Holborn near Chancery Lane, we were regularly surrounded by gentlemen in woollen night-caps, and dreadnought coats, and



ordered, in peremptory language, either to proceed with less uproar, or they should be compelled to take us under their own particular guidance.

"Ha! by St. George! by St. Anthony!" cried my companion, and striking down a watchman at each invocation, he fled like lightning down the street.

No sooner was this done, than a shower of blows fell upon me from the quarter staves of those around; and I found myself so cruelly mauled, that striking out right and left, I followed his example, and fled at my utmost speed.

Rattles now were sprung in all directions as I ran, and the hunt was fairly up. The whole town was the same to me. I knew no more about its localities than if I had been flying through the streets of Constantinople. I, therefore, held manfully on straight forward, overturning every thing that came in my way. At first I thought it rather a diverting sort of pastime, and concluded that I should soon outstrip my pursuers. But to my astonishment, I found that the agreeable sound of the instruments they carried in their fists ran rattling

along the street before me, taken up by the watch, as each man heard the whirl of his neighbouring guard. Accordingly I was assailed and followed by an increasing posse, the faster I sped. One fellow, drawing himself beside the houses, dealt a furious blow at me with his bludgeon as I passed, another hurled his weapon at my shins, whilst a third dashed his fists and lanthorn in my jaws and face.

On right on left, above, below,  
Sprung up at once the lurking foe.

At length, in Cranbourne Alley (for that I have since discovered to be the name of such a thoroughfare) I was fairly hemmed in and surrounded. Determined not to be taken alive, I wrested the staff from the man nearest, and dealt my blows so successfully that I floored several of my opponents. Eventually, however, I must have been overcome, but for the approach of a party of gentlemen, headed by a young nobleman, and who hearing the sound of the encounter, thrust headlong into the fray, and opposing their naked fists against the oaken cudgels of the watchmen, beat them about their

ears, and in a twinkling, disposed of a round dozen by laying them senseless on the pavement.

The throng, however, now swarmed so thickly upon us, that we fought like one of those regiments thrown into square at Waterloo, overwhelmed and almost hidden by the surrounding mass of assailants. "Hurrah for Ulster! and hurrah for Munster!" cried a great burly fellow, whirling his shelaleh round his head, and opposing himself to the leader of the gentlemen, who had rushed to my assistance. "Blood and ounds, but it's the noble Lord himself! by the powers, we've got him now!" The noble, or whatever else he might have been, and myself, were indeed evidently the two persons they seemed most desirous of capturing, and he saw it. He had been several times struck by the bludgeons of the watchmen, with blows one might have thought would have been sufficient to fell an ox, but of which he seemed to heed no more than if they had been so much thistle-down.

Wherever he dealt his own straight-handed hits, over went a sapient-looking Dogberry, with either disfurnished jaws, or broken collar-bone.

He absolutely chuckled with glee as he fought, and face and hands were covered with gore.

The continued spring of the rattles without the *mélée*, however, bringing more and more, even my ally saw that his efforts would soon be overpowered. Accordingly giving the signal to his followers for one bold charge, and cutting their way through the press, they dispersed in various directions, east, west, north and south.

"Follow!" he said to me, as he darted straight forwards into the open square before us. Being closely pursued, we turned into a door, which stood most invitingly open, and overturning an immense fat old woman in the passage, we traversed over her body, and rushed most unceremoniously into the parlour. It was filled with blooming young Hebes, who, seated around the festive board, with brimming goblets before them, were apparently passing away the watches of the night with mirth and jollity.

They all appeared as much delighted with our appearance as we were to obtain a refuge amongst them, and raised a shriek of joy that would have awakened the seven sleepers. Throwing his purse upon the table, the young noble

and the old lady whom he had capsized, to fetch  
of champagne, and order supper for the  
immediately. Before, however, the old  
man had time to leave the apartment, a  
knock at the door announced, that the guar-  
dians of the night had tracked, were at our  
door, and forcing an entrance. We were  
ready in the passage to oppose them, and once  
the row begun. For some time, in the  
narrow entrance, we maintained an unequal fight  
with the young ladies before mentioned escaping  
from the premises. Then, and not till  
my gallant leader consented once more to  
the use of his discretion, and retire for  
this stage.

My conductor bidding me follow, he dashed up the  
passage, four stairs at a bound, and rushing into  
one of the attics, threw up the window and  
like a cat, sprang upon the tiles. I felt the  
presence of one of our pursuers as I darted after  
him, but succeeded in clambering over the  
parapet, and gaining the roof. We traversed  
the tops of several houses, till we came to a dark  
miserable-looking row. My conductor, feeling  
tired as he proceeded, at length stopped, and  
took hold of a leaden water-spout, which he

judged went down to the pavement beneath and throwing his legs over the parapet, began to descend.

"Does that gutter reach to the bottom?" he said, looking over.

"I wish you could tell me that," he answered, "but, as I don't intend to remain upon the tiles all night, I mean to ascertain the fact."

If I had drank less wine, and had a trifle more discretion, I should have hesitated to follow; but as it was, I thought myself bound in honour to accompany one who so had gallantly aided me.

Grasping, therefore, the square orifice of the pipe, I threw myself over the side of the parapet and began to descend.

It was a painful and difficult task; and when about a quarter of the way down, I found my fellow passenger had met with some obstruction as my feet touched his hat.

"Hallo! there," said he, "what are you at? I can't get lower. This pipe runs in a slanting direction here; and though we can get down it well enough, we can't so easily get along it."

I looked down, and the sight made me sick.



"I shall fall," said I, "if you cling there much longer."

"Fall, be d—d!" answered the young noble; "scramble up again. We must get to the top of the house."

"What is that," said I, "between us and the area, which I can just distinguish below?"

"Why, I suppose it's a balcony," he answered; "but it's too far to drop."

Unfortunately, there was a watch-box in the street just below; and the watchman, who had been nodding very cozily there, was awakened by our dialogue. Holding up his lantern, he espied two black-looking objects, clinging like bottled spiders to the side of the house, the lowermost one kicking his legs and stretching them downwards in the vain hope of finding some buttress or coigne of vantage for his toes to rest upon. Without the smallest pity for our situation, he began to spring his odious rattle, and cry "thieves" as loud as he could bawl, running up and down the street like a bedlamite.

"Get up, get up," said my companion in misfortune: "we'll give that fellow the slip yet."

In vain I tried to scramble up the pipe. Not being able to get my arms round it, it was

impossible to go on an inch. The young Lord was enraged at the delay.

"Why don't you get up?" said he. "If I was there, I'd punch your stupid head for you. Get up, I say."

He tried to get up himself by clambering over me, and I found it as much as I could do to hold on with his additional weight.

Luckily I had obtained a footing upon the large staple, or we must both have fallen. Our situation was one of great peril. I felt the pipe beginning to loosen from its fastenings. It grew worse and worse.

"We had better take our chance, and drop," said I, "for, if the pipe gives way, we shall be flung headlong upon the spikes below."

The watchmen had by this time collected two or three more of the fraternity, and seeing the peril of our situation, dispatched a man in search of a ladder.

"Ah! ah! you're nicely trapped now, my coveys," cried one of the party, "hold on, if you can, till the ladder comes."

"You and your ladder be d——d," said the young Lord; "here goes for the balcony," and down he dropped.



## CHAPTER V.

My mind misgives,  
Some consequence, yet hanging in the stars,  
Shall bitterly begin his fearful date  
With this night's revels.

SHAKSPERE.

No sooner was the lively nobleman on his legs, than he called out to me that all was right as a trivet, and desired me to follow his example. As I could hold on no longer, I slid a few feet further down, and letting go my grasp, should most likely have been killed upon the spot, but that luckily I alighted upon his lordship's shoulders, and broke my fall by nearly breaking his back. He was, however, quickly on his legs again, and, dashing in the window-shutters, was soon within the house.

Making his way out at the door of the apart-

ment, he rushed down the stairs, felt his way to the street-door, and unfastening a ponderous chain, unlocked it, and bolted out.

Keeping close behind him, I was in the street almost as quickly as himself. Once more we dashed amongst the cudgels of the awaiting watchmen, and took to our heels.

A solitary coach was upon the stand at one end of the street, and my companion making a spring upon the box, I at the same moment pulled open the door, and leapt inside. The horses had been disfurnished of their head-stalls, and were quietly ruminating probably upon their last flagellation, with their unhappy muzzles deep buried in their nose-bags. It was all the same to their present driver however, who seizing the reins and whip from the footboard, amazed their hides with the bastinado he bestowed upon them.

"They can go if they like," he exclaimed, "and may I be d—d if they sha'n't go now!"

The skeleton steeds seemed fully impressed with the urgency of the occasion, and the old rumbling vehicle never, perhaps, in its best days, rattled along in faster style. The present

waggoner, quite as headlong and wild as Phaeton, although without the aid of the ribbons, whipped them to the west.

It was lucky that at this time of night, or rather morning, there was not a vehicle in our way; consequently the principal danger arose from the perilous style in which we avoided the corners, and all but touched the various posts.

The bawling Jarvey, who had popped out of the public-house near his stand, to behold the unwonted action of his pair of bloods, as they galloped past, was soon distanced.

Away we sped, swift as the pinions of the wind. The steeds were not quite so despicable as are sometimes to be found chained to the splinter-bar of a hackney coach, there to be lashed whilst strength holds them up upon four battered and failing legs, and consequently they made a very respectable effort.

Dr. Johnson affirms there can be but few things in this world more exquisite than the delight of being whirled along in a post-chaise. He may possibly be right in his fancy, but I certainly began to dislike being whirled along at the pace we were going, in a hackney Jarvey. Enough I considered had been done for the

purpose of getting beyond the reach of the Charlies, as they were termed, and I began to meditate upon the propriety of making a flying leap from the door of the vehicle ; and thrusting my head from the window, advertized Phaeton of my intent, unless he drew up.

Our career was, however, as suddenly terminated as it had commenced. The steeds, although from long use, they had as yet galloped up one street and down another, without compromising themselves, or dashing the coach either against the corner of a house or edge of a post, now from some miscalculation ran full upon one, and the pole of the carriage hitting the post as fairly as the well-directed lance of a knight in the lists, was shivered into a dozen fragments ; both horses were thrown to the earth, and the coach itself was cooped head over heels. The driver, who had seen plainly the fate of his triumphant car, and had no means of guiding the maddened steeds from the destructive obstacle, giving them one more lash by way of a parting favour, leaped to the ground as the smash took place. Disregarding the kicking steeds, encumbered in their harness, pulled open the door, and helped to extricate

me from my situation, half-stunned by the shock, and altogether in no pleasant plight.

The spot where this catastrophe took place was the corner of Charles Street, Grosvenor Square; and it so happened that there was a rout at one of those splendid mansions in the neighbourhood. When, therefore, his lordship, calling to me to bear a hand, had thrown himself upon the encumbered horses, and commenced unharnessing and assisting them up, as though he had not the slightest hand in their fall; half a dozen footmen, attendant upon some of the carriages in waiting, ran up and lent their assistance.

Whilst we thus worked at the fallen steeds, and eventually got them upon their legs again, the clattering steps of the discomfited coachman, together with the rushing sound of a posse attendant, proclaimed that our old enemies, the watch, were again at hand.

"Whose party is this?" inquired the young Lord of one of the footmen.

Although I heard the question, I failed in catching the man's answer.

"Good," said the noble; "we'll go to it. Give coachee a guinea for his fare, and don't

say which way we have mizzled." So saying and throwing a handful of gold amongst the footmen, he seized me by the arm, and walked off to the rout. "We'll sup here to-night," said he. "It's just the thing. I am invited—I recollect; and I'll introduce you."

Being quite in cue for a continuation of the spree, I did not refuse so agreeable a refuge from the watch-house; only in my own mind I doubted the possibility of our appearing in our present somewhat disfigured state. My companion, however, soon put all to rights. He was apparently well known to the servants of the house.

"We've had an upset," said he, when he entered the hall. "Show us a room where we can adjust our dress."

Two or three liveried attendants immediately ran before us, showed us into a dressing-room and brought us all the appliances to remove from our outward habiliments the signs of the fray. Our coats were taken off and brushed, hands and faces washed, and in a very few minutes we were presentable amongst the splendid assemblage above stairs. It was one of those brilliant parties, given at the close of the

season, amongst the cream of the cream of the aristocracy, and was rather a cram. All the remaining rank and fashion in town seemed present together.

The Marquis and myself, therefore, walked in quite unheeded. As for myself, I was lost in admiration at the quantity of lovely women I saw around me; creatures so beautiful as to realise the Mussulman's ideas of the heaven he hoped to attain to. It was, indeed, to me a sort of Paradise; and I gazed from one to the other with the greatest delight. There seemed so much ease in this society, that you might have thought, from the absence of restraint and the delightful intimacy which appeared to reign throughout the assemblage, that the whole party must have been composed of one family. I felt that as my companion had thus brought me amongst his friends, he ought to introduce me to the lady of the house without delay. He however said there was time enough; and threading his way through the various rooms, nodding to one acquaintance, and stopping for a moment to speak to another, we made the tour of the suite of apartments which had been thrown open to the company.

“ Ha ! Cœur de Lion, it's a treat to see you,” said a young titled Guardsman. “ Why, half a dozen of us have been making the tour of London for the last week to find your hiding-place.”

“ It's just as well for you, then,” returned the other, “ that you failed in the search, Georgie ; for it's my pleasure to be quit of you all. I'm sick of your idleness, and choose to be naught awhile.”

“ We heard you were in town,” said the Guardsman ; “ but none of us knew where you were to be found ; no one had seen you ; and you were, in short, incomprehensible, invisible, and inexplicable.”

“ I'll tell you what, Glansdale,” said Cœur de Lion, “ I'll be no longer guilty of this sin. I'm sick of fathering all your stale tricks, and begin to tire of my own. Dirty deeds are done by half the snobs about town, and my name is the stalking-horse. I shall cut the concern, altogether. But I'm surprized to see you here ; I thought you were at Brussels. You were hit hard, I heard, on the Derby day.”

“ Egad, that's fact ; I was rather hardly hit. Indeed, I may say, I *am* altogether floored.



The governor's in an awful state. Three times he has come down, as you know, to pay off my debts. Now he has completely turned his back upon me. However, it can't be helped; I must take the consequence, I suppose. To-morrow, I must send in my papers to the Horse Guards, and sell my commission; that will stop the gap for a while."

"Nonsense, man," said Cœur de Lion, "how much are you in for, altogether?"

Here the noble took the Guardsman apart, and they conferred for a few minutes.

"Call on me to-morrow, at eleven," said he, "where I have told you. If you get there at that hour, you shall have it; d—n the commission, it's not worth selling. Keep it, I tell you."

Lord Cœur de Lion passed on, and I followed. Wherever he went, he was regarded with curiosity; and his name whispered from mouth to mouth. Every one bowed to him with respect: for although the town rang with his wild and daring pranks, few noblemen in Great Britain possessed a nobler and kinder heart. He was a young man of very superior talents, too; and as much above the set he headed, as

greatest is from least. Whatever he undertook, he effected in gallant style ; whenever he was imitated, the perpetrators were sure to make a mull of it.

Although possessing a hundred thousand a-year, the young Lord was not much sought after by the anxious mothers who knew their daughters were out, for he never was known to flirt with a belle in his life ; and to fix him in matrimonial chains was a thing so hopeless, as never to have been apparently thought of by the most manœuvring dame.

Whilst Cœur de Lion was being recognized and accosted, I, being his companion, also came in for a share of notice occasionally. " Who's that tall, dark, young man, with Cœur de Lion ? " I heard once or twice asked, in a half whisper. One surmised that I was young Monteith, who had just been gazetted to the Life Guards. Another said, " it must be the Duke Gonzalo, who had just arrived from Naples ; " whilst a young, coxcomical, and dandified beau ventured to suggest, that I looked more like a bonnet to a hell, whom Cœur de Lion had introduced by way of spree, than anything else.

" How did the filly behave, Cœur de Lion ; I

understand you won that steeple-chase by a neck," said the young Earl of Craveccœur.

"Yes, and I should have won it by a score of yards, besides; only, that she broke her back in the last leap," said his Lordship. "She ran fifteen yards after she was done for; and pitched headforemost the remainder of the distance. That last wall was a puzzler; six feet, and a wide ditch on the other side. She went at it like a thunderbolt, capsizing Harkaway Snob, who was riding Thornton's Mammoth, and going clean over them both in the jump."

"Who's that with you, Cœur de Lion? The ladies with me are most anxious to know," inquired an officer of the Life Guards; "they say he's either the Chevalier Bayard or Lord Herbert of Cherbury, stepped from the frame. We all thought Mac Jupiter of ours was the most splendid representation of the visage of one of the old Norman knights; but your friend beats him hollow. What a countenance!"

"It has been well punched, at all events, to-night," returned Cœur de Lion. "You'd better ask him who he is; for h—g me, if I can tell,"

he continued, turning back to look at me, for the first time.

Whilst this sort of desultory chat was taking place, I had come to a stand to observe an elderly gentleman, who, apart from the crowd, was listening to the lively prattle of a blooming Hebe of about seventeen ; and apparently quite as much interested and careful in giving his answers to the trifling questions she asked, as if they had been put by the Prime Minister himself.

The tenor of the conversation arrested my steps, and I paused to contemplate the speakers. The iron-grey face of the cavalier was turned to the smiling eyes of the girl, as she played innocently with his eye-glass, and put her questions with as much *naïveté* as though she had been speaking to her own papa.

"Now do tell me, dear Duke," said the lively girl, "how came you all to allow yourselves to be surprized in Brussels at that ball?"

"We were not surprized," answered the warrior.

"Not surprized?" she returned, "but I am ;

for we are led to believe, you all turned out to fight in your dancing-pumps. And now tell me another thing I wish to know : if you had been beaten at Waterloo, what would have become of you all ?”

“ We should have retreated to Brussels,” returned the Duke.

“ Ah ! but could you have retreated to Brussels ?” said the Hebe, archly. “ I think you could not.”

“ I think we could,” said the warrior, smiling.

“ Well, you know best, certainly ; but I doubt, you are mistaken. My papa and Lord Gustavus went over the field last summer ; and they said you could not have retreated upon Brussels. And now tell me, since that point’s settled, which of your achievements do you consider the most of, and like the best. And before you answer that question, tell me whether you like those new shells my papa has invented, and sent to Woolwich for the Artillery ?”

“ Well then, to answer your last question first. I do not like those new-fashioned shells, as you call them, of your father’s,” said the warrior.”

“ And why not ?”

“Because they would be of little use,” he answered, “in service ; you might as well throw plum-puddings amongst the men.”

“Ha, ha ! what a wonderful man you are,” said the Hebe.

“With regard to the second question. I like the passage of the Douro better than anything we did in Spain.”

“Why so ?” said Hebe, getting more animated. “I do so like you, because you listen to my questions, and answer them so carefully. I love fighting ; and I adore you, as every woman in England ought to do.” (Here Hebe kissed the Duke’s hand.) “And now tell me, why you like the passage of the Douro better than all the rest.”

The Hebe and the warrior passed on, and were soon hidden from me in the crowd ; whilst I, admiring the goodness of disposition exhibited in the illustrious soldier (for such he appeared to be) which could patiently listen to, and kindly answer the prattle of the beautiful little romp who had fastened herself upon his arm, when noblemen and statesmen were seeking to catch his slightest nod, lost my introducer, and became aslo lost in the throng.

The wine I had drunk, and the whirl I had gone through, since I and the Captain had left our flaggons and our inn, had completely overcome my discretion, though the last action of the upset had considerably quieted me down. I was accordingly in an observing and monstrous sapient mood, and very much inclined to take everything as a good joke, and be argumentative, provided I could have found a listener. However, with all my drunken wisdom, I could not quite reconcile myself to my present position. It was not to be approved of, I thought, and I resolved to seek my introducer; and after thanking him for his services rendered, to withdraw and find my way homewards.

Elbowing, therefore, a passage through the rooms, which "blazed with light," and brayed with minstrelsy, I came to a small boudoir, fitted up in the Eastern style; and hearing voices within, I pushed aside the hangings, and entering, found myself the next moment in the presence of and not a yard distant from, the Duchess of Hurricane. To paint the surprise, and describe the look of the awful Duchess, it would be necessary to call to the reader's remembrance the occasional expression of the

countenance of the immortal Siddons, when she chose to be Lady Macbeth.

The moment she beheld the man whom of all others she abhorred, enter "with foul intrusion" into her very sanctum, she started to her feet, as if, "basilisk-like," to kill him with a look; whilst I with a start, like the Stranger when he espies Mrs. Haller, stood also transfixed.

My drunken wisdom immediately informed me, that I had committed a breach of decorum; and the truth flashed across my brain that I had unknowingly intruded into the mansion, and thrust my disagreeable presence into the select party of her Grace of Hurricane.

This was a position which sufficiently bewildered my already muddled brain; and was much easier for any one to get into, than to retire from with propriety. I was about to explain, that I had come with Lord Cœur de Lion; but I considered that would be to affirm that I had known to whose party I was intruding my presence, and to relate that I had entered the house to avoid the disagreeable consequence of a street-row and the watch-house I shrunk from.



The Duchess stared upon me for some time, apparently as if awaiting the explanation or apology I was bound to make; and I, as if fascinated by her gaze, returned her look in solemn silence.

In the elegant boudoir where the lady of the mansion had thus retired from the heat and fatigue of her crowded rooms, were congregated a select few of her intimates, and the conversation before animated sank at once on my intrusion.

The Duchess, either finding that I offered no word of apology or explanation, or perhaps seeing that I was a little flustered by flowing cups, with a haughty bow finished the scene by leaving the boudoir, followed by her party, who filed off with immense dignity of deportment, eyeing me as they left, as if I had been that strange animal described by Trinculo, Half monster, half fish.

Had I not been "in case to jostle a constable," this meeting would have disconcerted me. As it was, I felt rather dashed, and resolved to leave the house immediately. One lady remained, and she was apparently so much surprized that

she was unable to follow the Duchess and her party. Before I left the boudoir I turned to look at her—it was Miss Villeroy.

Acting with my accustomed impetuosity, I forgot all but the delight of being thus once more thrown into her presence. The beautiful Miss Villeroy was before me, and alone ; it was like offered mercy, and I threw myself at her feet. She attempted to rise, but I seized her hand and detained her.

“ In the name of Heaven ! Mr. Blount,” she exclaimed, “ what can have brought you to this house, after what has so recently happened ? ”

“ Ask me not, dear Miss Villeroy,” I exclaimed, “ but since the gods have favoured me by thus inexplicably guiding me once more into your presence, hear me plead for a pardon for all those unhappy transactions that have driven me from your good thoughts,—deeds which have been thrust upon me by others, and by which I, the victim of circumstances, am rendered especially wretched, since they have procured me your displeasure. As for those, silk-coated slaves, I pass them ;—of you, and you alone,

I ask pardon for all that has happened. Say but that you forgive me what is passed, and I will leave you, if you wish it, for evermore."

Miss Villeroy saw that I was at least as much excited by champaign as love on this occasion. She looked absolutely frightened.

"I do forgive you," said she, resigning the hand I had seized, which I covered with kisses; "but oh! for the love of Heaven stay not here. God only knows what further mischief may arise from this unlucky intrusion of yours."

Miss Villeroy rose from her seat, and withdrew her hand in some displeasure. "I must not remain here, Mr. Blount," said she; "permit me to join the Duchess."

I arose from my knee, though not without an effort; my pride came to my aid, I felt I was hardly used by the young lady, and drew aside that she might quit the apartment. The entrance of the master of the house in some little haste hindered her from leaving the boudoir.

The Duke, after glancing rapidly at me, addressed himself to his niece.

"Miss Villeroy," said he, "as I presume

this gentleman is here to-night by your invitation, I request the favour of your introducing me to him."

"You will grant me your pardon, my Lord," said I, "since I conclude I am addressing the Duke of Hurricane, and allow me to set you right in this matter. However much I may have wished for the honour of an interview with Miss Villeroy, our meeting here is perfectly accidental; nor did your niece know, till a few minutes ago, that I was in the metropolis.

The Duke was a descendant of the Plantagenets, and had all the dignity, chivalrous bearing, and noble look of one of that great line. He was a little fussy at times, but altogether he was a splendid specimen of his order. He was apparently a trifle out of sorts on this occasion, and his distended nostril and eye of fire, gave him something the look of Charles Kemble when Faulconbridge grows irritable at the presence of Austria before the gates of Angiers.

"I thought I understood the Duchess of Hurricane that I should find Mr. Blount, of Wharncliffe Grange in this apartment," said he, turning to me, doubtfully.

"I am that unfortunate man," I answered.

"Miss Villeroy," said the Duke (stepping aside to let her pass) "you will find your aunt waiting for you in the next room. Mr. Blount, perhaps you will favour me with a few minutes' conversation in my study."

"Farewell, Miss Villeroy," I exclaimed, in some little pique at her evident desire at an escape. "Whatever shall become of Michael Cassio, he's never anything but your poor servant. My Lord, I am yours to the Antipodes."

The Duke gave me a searching glance, and taking my arm, walked me off to his study.

"Mr. Blount," said he, as soon as he had closed the door, "your presence here somewhat surprises me. The Duchess of Hurricane supposes your appearance to-night is in consequence of Miss Villeroy's invitation. You tell me it is not so. To what circumstance, then, am I to understand we have the honour of your visit?"

"The circumstance, my Lord Duke, which has introduced me to you to-night, (for I conceive I am addressing the Duke of Hurricane), is sufficiently droll. In fact, every thing in this

world seems droll, and very amusing. You will, I dare say, excuse my relating the circumstance that has procured *me* the honour of being introduced to your Grace, if I split the difference, and tell you the person. The Lord Cœur de Lion was the person who brought me with him to your Grace's party."

The Duke saw immediately what was the matter. He rang the bell.

"Although," said he, "I should, in any other circumstances, have felt honoured by the introduction of a friend of Lord Cœur de Lion; yet, after what has so recently happened, I should have thought you would have hesitated to accept the offer of being introduced, when you found to whose party Cœur de Lion was invited. Seek for Lord Cœur de Lion," said he to the servant who entered. "His Lordship and yourself dined together, perhaps."

"I never dined," I replied "with Lord Cœur de Lion in my life, nor ever saw him till about an hour and a half ago. All I can say is, that I knew no more than the man in the moon where I was coming, nor can I tell you how I got here. That's all

the explanation I can give. The cross examination begins to grow tedious, my Lord; let us finish it. I feel sorry for the intrusion, and shall take my leave."

"Perhaps you will favour me by waiting till his Lordship comes down," returned his Grace. "I must know why he has placed us both in this somewhat disagreeable situation," saying this, he motioned me to take a chair. "I have heard much of you, Mr. Blount," he continued. "Though we have never met before, I regret it has been so, for I think much that has happened might have been avoided, had I seen you in time to have prevented the intimacy between my niece and yourself."

"I am greatly obliged to your Grace for your candour, at any rate," I said.

"Or, indeed, known," continued the Duke without noticing the interruption, "that you were so constantly a visitor at Marston Hall. I speak plainly, Mr. Blount, because I conceive it my duty so to do, and I must further tell you, since we have thus become acquainted, that as a guardian and relative of Miss Ville-roy, I could never permit that young lady with my sanction to receive the attentions of

one who bears a reputation for so much wildness and unsteadiness of conduct, and who, from his untractable disposition, is, I have been told, an exile from his father's roof, and alien from his affections."

"Good," said I, "have you any further trade with us? I begin to think this is vastly amusing."

"My Lord Cœur de Lion," continued the Duke, as that nobleman entered the room, "I feel rather surprised that you did not consider at the time you invited Mr. Blount to accompany you to the Duchess of Hurricane's party to-night, that recent circumstances had occurred, which would render it any thing but agreeable to that gentlemen to be presented here. Mr. Blount knew not to whose house he was coming, he tells me; but as you are related to Lord Hardenbrass, now lying seriously ill at Marston Hall you of course must have been aware of the unpleasantness of such meeting."

"You have already told me, Hurricane, more than I knew before, in telling me your friend's name," said Cœur de Lion, laughing. "There seems little introduction necessary on my part, but truth is, we were not so much to blame, for my



introducing him was the thought of the moment. I do not think he knew to whose house he was coming. If there be offence in the matter, you must visit it upon me, Lord Hurricane ; for I am alone in fault. Since we came together, we'll even depart together."

"You seem well met," said the Duke, "at all events. May I beg the favour of knowing when and where you became acquainted with Mr. Blount, my Lord?"

"Certainly," returned his Lordship, "I can explain to your satisfaction in a few words the length and breadth of our intimacy. The first sight I ever had of our friend here, who seems mightily inclined to drop off to sleep in that easy chair of yours—"

"Enough said, gentlemen," said I, interrupting him, and half asleep, "unconsciously to have—"

"The first sight I ever had of our friend was in Cranbourne Alley, fighting with at least a dozen watchmen. His prowess interested me, and I rescued and brought him off."

"Unconsciously," I continued, endeavouring to argue the point.

"The first time I ever spoke to Mr. Blount,"

interrupted Cœur de Lion, "was on the gutter of Mother Midnight's establishment behind Leicester Square. That he was a gentleman, I felt convinced from his conduct; and being upset here at your door, I brought him to your Grace's party."

"Unconsciously," said I, now half asleep, "to have offended."

"So," said the Duke, "you took the liberty, then, of bringing a person seen and known for the first time?"

"Unconscious," said I, again endeavouring to have out my say, in spite of the drowsiness which had seized me.

"In the situation," continued the Duke, "you have mentioned, and introduce him in the state you see he is in, at the Duchess's party. Enough, Sir, you shall hear further from me on this matter."

"Unconsciously (I at last managed to utter) to have offended the Duke and Duchess of Hurricane, gives me the greatest pain. But I beg to say, it has been quite unconsciously on mine and this gentleman's part. Nevertheless, if offence is taken, it can't be avoided, and the affair must proceed. My Lord Duke, I have the

honour of wishing you good night, this is my address," so saying, and laying on the table Captain Catchflat's card in place of my own, I managed to rise, and Lord Cœur de Lion, making a haughty bow to the Duke, we walked out together.

## CHAPTER VI.

He a captain! Hang him, rogue! He lives upon  
mouldy stew'd prunes, and dried cakes.

SHAKSPERE.

TOTALLY unused to wine, I had, like Cassio, but poor and unhappy brains for drinking, and already experienced the different stages of drunkenness described by Olivia's clown, first fool, then madman, and was now about nearing the third stage, my wits being nearly drowned, or at least becoming stupified; all which stages had supervened from the first dose or bout. However, being strong in constitution, I wrestled with the inordinate fiend, and followed my companion resolutely.

"That Hurricane is an ass," said Cœur de Lion, when we reached the street: "he's always fancying that his dignity is in danger. It's just as well that he is to call me out for this night's

fun, for I had always rather be called than call."

"If any body's dignity has been hurt, I think mine's the most damaged," said I, "and if any body's to be called out, it strikes me I ought to be the appellant."

"We'll think about that hereafter," he returned.

"May I beg the favour of knowing where we are progressing towards," I asked, "for the long and interminable row of lamps before us seems to lead in an avenue of dancing stars, to the extreme end of the world. I protest I see no termination to them."

"This," said Cœur de Lion, "is Brook Street, and my destination is nearly as far as the last lamp you can spy. I recommend you to get a bed at the same hotel, unless you have made up your mind to sleep in the streets."

"I do, indeed, feel rather uncomfortable and extremely sick, Lord Cœur de Lion," said I, "and the very stones in this lonely street, (as Rob Roy says), seem to rise up to apprehend me; they appear to have a strange inclination to hit me upon the nose every step I take."

“ Ah ! ah ! ” said Cœur de Lion, “ that’s because you can no more smoke, than you can drink. It’s the cigar, man, which I gave you just now, that makes you so giddy. You must learn to smoke in order to meet the tastes of the Hussars ; a Dragoon without a pipe in his mouth, is as incomplete as without his spurs. Now I think on’t, we’ll turn in at Madame De Galloni’s in Regent Street, and see what’s going on there. I’ll introduce you to Madame De Galloni, the finest woman in town.”

“ Another introduction, and more fine women, eh ? ” I said. “ Well I’m on the wide world now, that’s a fact. May I beg the favour of knowing who your friend Madame De Galloni is, for I had rather not experience a second edition of her Grace of Hurricane.”

“ Madame de Galloni is a French lady, not long arrived from Paris,” answered his Lordship: “ she is always glad to see her friends at her little *soirées*, and she will be only too happy to welcome us to-night. But mind one thing, you are not to play there ; I won’t introduce you unless you promise me not to play. It’s a clear case, you’re exceedingly green, and ought

to have brought your grandmother up to town to take care of you."

"*Vous avez raison*," said I, "it's a lamentable truth. I'm extremely obliged to your Lordship for supplying the old lady's place. I do, indeed, feel extremely helpless just now; that cigar hath proved mine enemy, indeed."

"Here we are at Madame's," said Cœur de Lion, stopping and knocking at a door in Regent Street, which after some little delay, and more than one person peeping at us with the chain up, was at length opened, and we entered and walked up stairs.

Madame De Galloni's apartments were brilliantly illuminated, and filled with company. Several very handsome Frenchwomen were present, and a decent accompaniment of heroes from the *grand nation*, cavaliers whose visages were garnished with hair enough to stuff all the chair cushions in the apartments, and whose diamond studs and breast pins, gleamed and glittered upon the sombre ground of the dirty shirts in which they were stuck. The remainder of the company was made up of London *roués* and metropolitan flats.

Several tables were occupied by players, at

several sorts of games, and one large table, at which the less determined gamblers were congregated more for the purpose of flirting with the handsome Frenchwomen than for the sake of the game, was presided over by the lady of the house. She clutched avariciously in one hand a large-sized money box, with a small opening at the top, into which she received a stipulated douceur from whoever won the pool at the round game at which they were engaged.

She arose the moment she saw us enter the room, and rushed up to us with great affectation of delight : " Ah," said she, " mon brave ! I am so glad you come again. You was so droll last time you come, dat we have been quite misérable ever since ; dis is de first soirée I have been able for. You was so funny, dat we all get into watch-box, and taken before de police in de morning.

Cœur de Lion had been bullied, I afterwards found, by the Frenchmen, and some of his friends cheated, upon which he had soundly thrashed some half-a-dozen, and kicked the rest into the street, the hubbub attending which had caused the whole party to be carried



off to the watch-house; himself alone escaping, by upsetting every one who came in his way.

“You play, *mon cher*?” continued Madame, bending her head capriciously on one side. “Ah no, you nevere play. Your handsome friend play, I dare say. Come, *sare*, and join.—My Lord—you not to forget *de box*, *de box* keep *de house*, and I keep *de box*.”

My companion thus solicited, dropped his gold into the box, and I followed his example, to the no small delight of the hostess; and we sat down to observe the progress of the game.

Madame De Galloni was a splendid specimen of French beauty; she was tall, and rather of the stoutest, but her form was magnificent, her complexion was dark, and her hair like the raven’s wing. Her eye was as brilliant as the diamond, and her features beautifully formed; but when you looked upon her, you could see she would as easily murder with a stiletto while she smiled, as with her beautiful eyes. One minute she looked like an angel, (that was when the winner deposited his coin in her tin box,) the next she scowled like a fiend, that was

when any one forgot, or endeavoured to shun the offering.

'Twas pity, I thought, that one so handsome, should be so avaricious. The box was the ostensible way in which she kept up her rooms; but the truth was, that the hirsute Frenchmen attendant, were the pluckers of all unfortunates, who ventured to play.

"Ah, Captain!" shrieked the handsome Galloni: "why you not put in my box dat time. Shame, Sare, to deceive me. How am I to keep my rooms light, for you to come play widout you put in dis box, you nasty beast."

"Voilà," said the Captain, dropping in the coin.

"Yes, voilà, it is," returned the Frenchwoman. "You please to say voilà every time you win, Sare, aloud, mind or you shall not play more. . You cheat me once, twice, three times, if I had not look sharp after you."

"Madame," said the Captain, "have a care; I don't like those observations."

"No," returned the Galloni; "you like not observation too much, ven you vin, as you

alwaise do, and cheat my box as you alwaise try."

"I'll play no more at your table," said the offended militaire, rising, "Voilà, here's for your d—d charity box."

"You must speak by the card, Captain; equivocation will undo you here," said Cœur de Lion.

"Who made that observation?" said the Captain, turning fiercely round, and rushing up to him.

The Captain was extremely short-sighted, and he rammed his face close into that of the noble, who sat with the utmost coolness, and smiled upon his fiery visage.

No sooner did he catch a fair glimpse of the countenance of Cœur de Lion, than his ferocious look changed into something like consternation and dismay, and he drew back, as though he had seen a basilisk.

"Oh, my Lord," said he, "I beg ten thousand pardons. I did not know it was you who spoke. I trust I see you well," and he drew off.

In progressing to one of the other tables, he passed and recognized me.

"Ah! Mr. Blount," he exclaimed, seizing

my hand, "I am delighted to see you again."

It was my friend, Captain Catchflat, from the Wolds.

"Do you know that fellow?" said Cœur de Lion, carelessly; "is he a friend of yours?"

"Yes," I said, "we are staying in the same hotel together. He comes from near the same part of the world I myself come from."

"Oh!" he returned significantly, "does he?" and he walked away to another part of the room.

The Captain, meanwhile, had a thousand apologies to make for having outran me in the beginning of the evening's amusements. He proposed teaching me how to play at rouge et noir; and forgetting the injunctions of the generous Cœur de Lion, in the course of an hour I was a considerable gainer, and quite in love with the game.

My introducer fought rather shy of me, after he discovered my acquaintanceship with the Captain. Once during the night, he addressed me, advising me to cut the concern and sheer off to bed, after which I saw him no more.

Meanwhile, the Captain kindly taught me

several other games of chance ; and at day-break, we took leave of the radiant Frenchwoman and nymphs, and made our way towards our hotel, I having lost every coin I had in my purse, over and above what I had won, and standing indebted to Catchflat a trifling sixty pounds.

The Captain was now in higher glee than ever, and vowed he would look in at the finish, and get a cup of coffee before we returned to our inn. We accordingly made our way to a place situated somewhere near Covent Garden, where, seated upon benches in a filthy room, amongst some scores of paviours, Irish bricklayers, and carters, we refreshed ourselves with coffee and roasted potatoes. Here the Captain, who seemed always anxious for the beginning of a fray, managed to offend an Irish hod-bearer ; and, after having volunteered not only to fight him with one hand tied behind him, but to thrash him within an inch of his life in ten minutes, received, with the greatest humility and meekness of disposition, sundry cuffs from his opponent in the face, and more than one kick behind ; whilst I myself managed to come in for several ugly blows, in the endeavour at

restraining Pat's ire ; so that, at last, I became the principal in the fight, and was obliged to take the Captain's challenge upon myself, and engage with a hod-man in a stand-up fight. A shindy amongst a posse of Emerald Islanders, is a mighty catching affair, and I had quickly half a dozen hammering at me at once. The row spread like wildfire, and the Finish was in a state of disorganization. The market-men, who were English, fought on my side, and the Paddies whacked away for the hod-man. The room became too small for the conflict, and the riot extended into the street. Rattles were sprung by dozens, and no man regarded them, till at last the Captain, myself, and some half a dozen of the lowest ruffians from Calmel Buildings, and St. Giles's, were captured, and conveyed to the watch-house. Here we were quoited down, and thrust in a sort of cellar, amongst other worthies who had disturbed the peace of the metropolis.

The place was filthy and wet, and at first so dark, that, as Falstaff says, you could not see your hand. However, those who had been in durance before us had become more accustomed to the gloom, and seeing the Captain and myself in the garb of gentlemen, they amused

themselves by throwing all the filth they could find over to our end of the prison.

The gallant Captain Catchflat seemed as though he had served an apprenticeship to this sort of treatment. He gathered himself together in one corner of the dungeon, like Dalgetty in the cell of the Duke of Argyle at Inverary; and to my indignant complaint of such an outrage upon the sacred persons of gentlemen of his and my own dignity, he replied in the words of the vision in the cave of Montesinos, "Patience, and shuffle the cards."

"Patience, my dear Sir, and a trifle of endurance, you will find the best recipe here. Gentlemen," said he, to the crew of pick-pockets and ruffians who were amusing themselves at our discomfort, and giving us a foretaste of the pillory, "gentlemen, if you are gentlemen, behave yourselves like gentlemen, and give us as little of this ungentle usage as you like. We've no objection to stand tip if you'll allow us to sleep comfortably till we're had up."

I have passed many a night since that day in the open world, and exposed to the elements; but I never felt so chilled and uncomfortable as I did in this London watch-house. Ere long,

however, we were had up, fined, and reprimanded for our behaviour, and reached our inn, dirty, draggled, uncomfortable, and ill, as if we had been ducked in half a dozen horse-ponds. The Captain recommended a hot bath, and retired to bed, to try and sleep off the fatigue of the night's amusement.

To sleep, however, I found impossible; and I lay and pondered over the ill-luck that had dogged my footsteps, and led me to expose myself, in such a situation, before the Duke and Duchess of Hurricane, and Miss Villeroy. I saw that all was now over in that quarter. I had disgusted Miss Villeroy, and confirmed the ill opinion which both the Duke and Duchess had entertained of me; and all without the least fault that I could perceive on my own part.

Now that I had become sobered, I recollected everything which had happened. I had degraded myself in the eyes of the whole room; and there appeared no explanation or excuse that I could offer. "Alas!" I said,

"It will help me nothing,

To plead mine innocence; for that die is on me,  
Which makes my whitest part black."

I had, however, one consolation. The Lady



Constance de Clifford had not seen me. Apparently, she was absent from home, and had been spared the shock of witnessing the entrance, as an intruder in her mother's party, of one whom she had honoured with her friendship, but who was regarded by them as a half-drunken blackguard, whom it was great forbearance not to kick into the street.

The noble, generous, and true-hearted Constance, I felt convinced, would never believe ill of me. I called to mind every look and expression of her beautiful countenance; all the hours we had spent since we had first become acquainted; the delightful scenes in which we had lingered, and walked and ridden amongst, returned to my remembrance; and suddenly I found myself more in love with Lady Constance de Clifford, than ever I had been with her beautiful cousin. Nay, I had wondered where my eyes, ears, and senses, could have been ever to have so preferred the one to the other:

Not Hermia, I said, but Helena I love:

Who would not change a raven for a dove?

Now would I have given a thousand ducats for

but half an hour of one of those opportunities I had so often neglected. With my accustomed impetuosity, I resolved to begin by times ; and jumping out of bed, and seeking my writing materials, seated myself at the little dressing table, and addressed her in the following stanzas :—

The lonely heart divided far,  
From all it lived but to adore,  
Is dark as night, whose brightest star  
Is seen no more.

Alas ! that hopes should only spring  
Within my soul, to be o'erthrown ;  
Like budding-flowers, ere blossoming,  
All withered, strewn.

Thy perfect form, within my breast,  
Have I long hoarded up in vain,  
And never can my heart be blest  
By thee again.

Not so, not so ; the hour of need  
Thy noble heart will not forsake ;  
Thy own sweet breast the bruised reed  
Will never break !

Then come ! But yet I fear to see  
My fancied joys all melt away,  
And faded, as I gaze on thee,  
Hope's dying ray.

To gather from thy glance the woe,  
I should expect—but yet will not,  
To see thy smile of scorn, and know  
I am forgot !

And wilt thou dash the hopes away,  
That to thy love still eager cling,  
As birds that watch the earliest ray  
Of sunny spring ?

And will thy heart, so truly loved,  
The dearest prayers of mine repel ?  
To gentle pity steeled—unmoved—  
Love's yearnings quell ?

When all around with gladness own,  
The rapture of thy loveliness,  
My heart will still—its hopes o'erthrown—  
Thy form caress.

Were endless night my future lot,  
Should morn but wake to misery,  
Till mind was gone—or life was not—  
I'd think on thee !

Again, then, let me see thy face,  
Thy lip, where smiles should ever play,  
If there no thought of me I trace,  
I'd turn away.

The brightest dream that cheered my rest,  
The sweetest voice that whispered peace,  
The loveliest form that filled my breast,  
Will ever cease.

Having finished the above effusion, I felt as if I had in some sort made reparation for my former blindness: and paved the way also, perhaps, to reparation of the ills of the last few hours. Could I but see Constance, I imagined it would not be hard to restore myself to her good graces. The clock of one of the neighbouring churches was striking six, as I folded up and directed my verse. It was too early to send them; so tumbling into bed, I soon fell asleep.

It was late in the day ere I was awoke by my excellent friend, Catchflat, who, knocking at my door, announced that he had ordered our dinner at home, as he conceived I should not feel much inclined to turn out early.

“But, my dear fellow!” he exclaimed, drawing up the blinds of the window, which admitted but a dubious sort of light into the room, from the Chaucer-like balcony, which hung over the inn-yard; “why, I had no idea that you had been so punished about the nob in last night’s spree. Your peepers are in mourning; have you looked at yourself in the glass this morning?”

“The devil!” I said; “you don’t mean to

say my eyes are blackened. I do, in truth, feel rather sore about the face and head, and my nose hath a sensation as though a hot iron had been thrust up it, and each nostril stuffed with cayenne pepper. Pray ring the bell, my good sir, and order me hot water. I will inspect the state of my countenance forthwith, and join you below as soon as I am dressed."

When the Captain left the room, I jumped out of bed, and seizing the looking-glass, beheld my visage nearly as much dilapidated and in as rueful a state as the knight of La Mancha's must have appeared after his carcase had been travelled over and his jaws demolished by the drubbing of the lover of the gentle Maritornes. There was a black circle entirely round each eye, my nose was swollen into a perfect proboscis, and portions of the skin struck off my cheeks.

The boots of the inn, a little quiver fellow, with an infantine voice, and a figure like what one might have imagined was the identical form of the inimitable Francis of Eastcheap, grinned like a little ogre when he entered and beheld me.

"Oh, my eyes! what a guy," said he.

" You'll excuse me, Sir, but you do look sich a rum un. My vigs! arnt 'em been a pitching into you, neither. You'll excuse me, Sir; but there's a been a more than one a hitting at you when you catched that hiding. I wish I'd a been somewhere near when it happened."

" I wish you had, my little man," said I dolefully; " or any one else with spirit enough to have helped me out of that affair. I shall not be fit to be seen for a month."

" You've give 'em as good as they brought, however," said he; " look at your poor fists else, all knock'd to bits."

Here the little boots put himself into scientific attitude, and began to dodge about the room, like a sprite, now parrying one blow, and anon beating off another, springing back and darting forwards, apparently for the purpose of obtaining an advantageous plant in his imaginary adversary's knowledge-box, with so much alacrity, that I began to have a very elevated opinion of his prowess. But when at last he delivered his straight-handed blows, he became so totally infuriated, that he darted all over the room, like a perfect bedlamite.

" Ah, I wish I had been beside you, Sir," he

said, stopping to take breath ; " I'd have smash'd 'em up. I consider myself one of the fancy, Sir ; and if I'd a been in the way when you came home last night, I'd a clapped a raw beef steak upon your precious face. Now, it's too late. You can't wash a blackamore white, arter he's once been properly wallopped, and slept upon it. The only thing you can do now, is to send for the 'poticary, and clap half a dozen leeches on each eye, and as many more upon your nose. I lived with Tom Crib once, Sir, and many a time I've doctored his nob for him. I'd have pitch'd into 'em."

During this display of the little fellow's prowess, and whilst I forgot my own rueful plight in laughter and admiration at his eccentricity, a shrill voice called to him from the balcony, which seemed to strike him all of a heap, and he sneaked out of the room, more like a dog with a bottle at his tail, than the hero I had began to consider him.

The voice which so paralyzed his gallant bearing was that of his wife, the athletic chambermaid of the hotel, and the thundering bastinado she bestowed upon his carcase, gave me an opportunity of judging in how far his scien-

tific and curious parries, learned whilst with the champion, had been of service. It seemed, however, that the advice regarding the application of beef steaks applied in time, were as necessary for him as myself, for I much feared, from what I witnessed in the balcony before my window, that the poor little man would be likely to exhibit as disgraceful an appearance as I myself did. After pummeling him till she was out of breath, the Amazon consented to tell him what the infliction was for.

“ You little rascal ! ” said she ; “ you poor, beggarly, fellow ! how dare you stay out all night, and leave me to do your dirty work. Go,” she continued, “ you apology for a boots, and do your work ! you miserable specimen of a porter, or I’ll break every bone in your diminutive body, I will ! ”

In short, I was obliged to interfere, and procure him a pardon ; and in return, he promised to deliver the enclosure, containing my verses, some time that evening with his own hand.

It was not a little annoying to me to be rendered thus unfit for decent society, by my adventures at the Finish ; for during the time I had lain tossing on my pillow, I had revolved things



over in my mind, and determined forthwith to shift my quarters from this part of the town. My father might soon now arrive, and I thought I had better, therefore, call and introduce myself to my relatives in Portman Square. My new friend, too, I had reason to hold in slight regard, as to his personal courage, for had he behaved with proper spirit in the society to which he had introduced me, I should not have been obliged to take up the cudgels in his defence.

The Captain, I saw, was a coward and a bully. To me he had behaved most unhand-somely ; and yet, so meekly did he beg my pardon, that, for the life of me, I couldn't find it in my heart to kick him. He offered me many little civilities too whilst confined to the house, volunteered to call upon several tradesmen at the west end of the town, and giving orders for my outfit, took upon himself the task of arranging what articles were necessary for a cavalry officer on first joining his regiment. He also purchased me a pair of green goggles to hide the unsightly circles which adorned my eyes, and, by way of amusing the dull age of a whole week, during which I remained unfit to be seen, he once more undertook to give me a lesson with the dice-

box, in the joyous hope I might revenge myself for what he had won from me at Madame de Galloni's rooms. In fact, I felt myself under considerable obligations to the gallant Captain for his many civilities, and his great attention during this time; and, as we frequently strolled out after dark, he introduced me into several small gambling houses, where we were so fortunate as to make the acquaintance of other gentlemen, his friends, of disposition similar to his own.

In short, before many days were passed in this worshipful society, I acquired such a fondness for hazard, blind-hooky and billiards, that I was never happy but when either dice, cards, or cue was in my grasp. We began with the paste-board after breakfast, knocked the balls about till nightfall, and rattled the bones till dawn; till, in short, I lost every sixpence I brought with me to town. After that, I staked every article of baggage I possessed; and at last, stood deeply indebted to Catchflat besides.

It was on the morning after I had been thus cleaned out, that, on coming down to breakfast, I found my friend had left town for a day or two. He was gone, the little waiter told me, to pay a visit to a nobleman residing about ten

miles out of town. Finding, therefore, my face pretty well restored to its wonted comeliness, I hid the still remaining dark circles, which had now taken the various hues of the rain-bow, under cover of the capacious green goggles the Captain had provided me with, and sallied out to take a walk in the west end of the town.

London is certainly an amusing village. Some men there are who cannot bear to step one furlong beyond its precincts, who know no feeling of delight in the breath of Heaven, unless breathed with a proportionable quantity of foul and pestilent vapours, qualified with the smoke and gases of this particular metropolis; men to whom a green lane, a forest glade, or the misty mountain tops, is an abomination; nay, even a country town or village, be it ever so pleasantly situate, a hell upon earth; men who are called "men about town," who are known to each other from youth to age by sight only, as having been met prowling, with lack-lustre eye, about the different streets for years and years, identified with the very stones they tread on, and the streets that have risen up during their progress in life.

“How long I have known that man about town!” says one of these loungers. “Winter and summer, I do not think that gentleman has ever left London for a day, and I can’t see the slightest change since the first hour I saw him.”

Each thinks the other an ever-green, as each remembers his fellow street-walker, for years, (he thinks as he now sees him,) with the same jaundiced smile upon his visage, sauntering in the same path. Of earth and sky he takes no part in observing the beauty; but how quick is his glance upon a passing face recognized as known about town? Singular beings! not one could give the most distant guess as to the means whereby the other lives, or his place of abode; neither does their long-sight acquaintanceship engender or beget any feelings of good will.

“I wonder,” says one, “who that fellow can be? I have seen him every day these fifty years about town. I meet him in the city, in the Park, at the theatre, in every street at the west end, and by some strange chance, nearly knock him over at every corner I turn; but never yet

could I discover man, woman, or child, who could tell me his name."

Sometimes you meet one of these old-world faces in the coffee-room of an hotel, taking his solitary dinner and pint of port. Quietly, silently, and studiously, he progresses through his meal, spelling every advertisement in one of the daily papers, as he discusses his food. My friend Catchflat had pointed out one or two of these "London haunting *martlets*," as men who had been in the sear when he was a boy, and still pottered about the metropolis unchanged, like the wandering Jew, or the man looking after his shadow. "I cannot say," he continued, "that I should like to live entirely in London all the year round, but still I think it is the only place within the environs of which a man could be imprisoned for life, without feeling the imprisonment an infliction."

Just at this time, it was a great treat to me to wander about, and observe the various places of amusement offered by merely passing through its streets. On this day, I amused myself by sauntering about the west end; and towards evening, finding a few stray coins in my pocket, turned

into Joy's Coffee House in Covent Garden, and ordered dinner. Tired with my walk, I threw myself into a chair in the coffee-room. Two youths were sitting over their wine, discussing the police reports in an old newspaper, at the table next me.

"How often that fellow has been had up," said one; "I wonder this last affair didn't give him a turn at the tread-mill." "Who is that fellow, his companion?" inquired the other. "I've seen him a good deal about lately, and have observed Catchflat pigeon him nicely once or twice in the hall in Jermyn Street. I at first thought he was a leg at first; but I suspect now that he's a green-horn Catchflat has got hold of somewhere in one of his country trips." Just at this moment the speaker caught sight of me at the table near him; and turning his back with some little confusion, signed to his companion, and the conversation dropped.

I instantly rose from my seat, and begged the loan of the paper. In the police report I found the following:—

"Marlborough Street. On Saturday, two persons, calling themselves gentlemen, were charged

with creating a most disgraceful riot in Covent Garden, early in the morning. It appeared they had been drinking with the low ruffians who are just now employed in paving New Street close hand; and having reduced themselves to a state of madness, they became so outrageous, that even the blackguards assembled thrust them out of their society. Upon which, they rushed into Covent Garden, knocking down every person who came in their way, till they were ultimately secured, and lodged in Marylebone Watch-house. One of these worthies has been frequently before at the police-office, and is well-known. His name is Catchflat. He, we believe, held a commission in the army, but was turned out of the service for malpractices; since which he has narrowly escaped hanging for forgery—a regular *chevalier d'industrie*. The other *gentleman* gave the name Blount; and is, we dare say, a horse of the same colour—*arcades ambo, id est*, blackguards both. They were fined and discharged, after being properly reprimanded.”

This paragraph completely spoiled my appetite. I saw that I had been gulled by this “common robber,” who had, as Falstaff has it, “made a



younger of me." I had taken mine ease in mine inn to some purpose ; and whilst I was so absorbed in the new accomplishment that Catchflat was teaching me, I had not even found time to look into the daily paper. Swallowing my meal as fast as I could gulp it down, I determined to go home, and cane the Captain within an inch of his life. Before I had finished it, however, another paragraph, in the *Morning Post* of that day, and which the waiter handed to me, completely drove the former one, and the miserable scoundrel, Catchflat, for the moment from my remembrance. It was headed, "The Recent Duel," and ran thus :-

"We are grieved to hear, that the Duke of Hurricane still continues in the most precarious state ; and his medical attendants fear there is not the slightest chance of recovery. A second attempt was made yesterday by Mr. Guthrie, to extract the ball (which has lodged somewhere near the heart) without success. The Duke has borne both operations with the most heroic fortitude ; and it is believed a third attempt will be made by Mr. Guthrie next week. The quarrel between his Grace and Lord Cœur de Lion, we are informed, was in consequence of some diffi-



rence, which is said to have arisen at the Duchess's rout on the 16th instant; and in which it is also said a third person, whose name we have not been able to learn, was the offending party, Lord Cœur de Lion taking the quarrel upon himself, and refusing any explanation till after the meeting had taken place."

So then a duel had been fought, and the life of a great and good man—a man of high rank, and an ornament to his order—was likely to be sacrificed, owing to my having unfortunately made my appearance at his house with my Lord Cœur de Lion. It really appeared to me that I was not only unlucky myself, but the cause of ill luck in others. I was like the sea-fowl, whose coming is the forerunner of danger and tempest. My infernal verses, too, had perhaps arrived pretty much about the time Lady Constance de Clifford most probably beheld the bleeding body of her beloved father brought into the house—murdered, she might well think, by my means.

At the moment I lost all spirit, and began to despair. Rallying, however, after some time, I determined to sally forth, and soundly thrash my new friend, Captain Catchflat.

"There will, at least, be some sort of satisfaction in that," said I. "How dare that dastardly swindler introduce himself to a gentleman, and after getting him into all sorts of scrapes, cheat him out of his money and respectability?"

Most youngsters are incensed at finding themselves the dupes of a designing knave. I felt I had proved myself extremely soft; and after the dejection consequent upon reading the last paragraph, my choler arose when I reflected on the first. I felt annoyed with myself for having endured the society of a man, whose style I could not approve, and whose companionship I could not have borne, had not my battered visage forced me to remain in doors. Like Paul Pry, I vowed never to be good-natured again. "Damn the fellow," I said, "I would not have suffered such vulgarity for another week, for the sea's worth." I thought the chagrin of it would have killed me. To be mixed up with such a scoundrel in the public papers, was a scrape indeed. "Captain, thou abominable cheater!" I exclaimed, rising, and seizing my hat; "art thou not ashamed to be called Captain? If captains were of my mind, they would truncheon y—

at, for taking their names upon you, before you have earned them."

"I beg your pardon, Sir," said the waiter, presenting his bill; "I beg your pardon, Sir, but it's customary to pay for what you call for at this hotel, especially as we have never had the pleasure of seeing you except on the night you supped here with Captain Catchflat; you will find both the accounts there, Sir."

Let it suffice, then, to mention that, on reaching my inn, I found to my dismay that this worthy officer had absented himself without leave or beat of drum, carrying with him not only all those sums he had so frequently won of me, but actually every article of any value I had in my portmanteaus, and whatever he could lay his hands on of the various articles which had been completed and sent home, leaving me moreover to pay for all the breakfasts, dinners and suppers he had partaken of, and so generously treated me to, whilst we had been *bons camarades*. But worse than this, than these, than all, was the discovery which I soon afterwards made, that from his having so frequently attended me to the shops of the tradesmen I was having my different articles of clothing from, he had

made use of my recommendation, and procured large quantities of goods for himself. In fact, he had done the thing well, and looked the idiot I felt myself.

A ponderous portmanteau, which he had brought with him to the hotel, was all that remained for me to take possession of in return, and as he had taken out the pickings of the kit, I declined having anything to do with that.

The Bardolph-faced landlord of the hotel naturally held me in some sort of suspicion, and I found myself compelled immediately to despatch a letter by my little friend, Bob, to my relation in Portman Square, in order to be extricated from the difficulties by which I was now surrounded.

Nothing, indeed, would satisfy mine host, until his bill was paid; he said, "he was one of those obdurate citizens, whose hearts are hardened to any sound but the chink of sovereigns, and possessing no more mercy or consideration than an unbribed sheriff's-officer." "He doubted," he said, "nothing of my respectability, but that wouldn't serve his turn. He must have his bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill."

The Captain," he hinted, "could never have managed matters, as he had done, without my assistance." At length, growing irate at his impertinence, I turned him out of the room, and threatened to kick him down stairs.

## CHAPTER VII.

Had I but died an hour before this chance  
I had liv'd a blessed time ; for from this instant  
There's nothing serious in mortality :  
Renown and grace is dead.

Most sacrilegious murder.

SHAKSPERE.

FROM the unpleasant dilemma, which I have recorded in the foregoing chapter, I was however after a few hours relieved. A carriage drove into the yard, and General d'Acre was announced.

Sir Augustus d'Acre had served much both in America, and "on other grounds, Christian and Heathen." He was a thorough specimen of the old school:—pipeclay from heel to point of tail. He wore his frock-coat buttoned to the chin, white gaiters underneath his trousers, and had all the appearance of one of the

icers of a former system, who would be like  
ough after wheeling into line, to take off  
cocked hat, and say to the enemy with a  
lite bow, "Gentlemen of the French guard,  
re us your fire." I do not think he could  
ve changed his pace from ordinary time had  
house been about to be blown about his  
s, and the train actually lighted.

The little boots darting into the room before  
n, with great glee mispronounced his name  
announcing him.

"General Cake, Sir," said he, "to see you."

The General gave him a look as he passed,  
at seemed to shrivel the poor little fellow like  
rchment in a white heat. If there was one  
ng he prided himself upon more than another,  
was his name. There were three hundred  
hes conveyed in that one glance of his eye.  
e next moment it fell upon me, as I rose  
receive him, and I felt at once like one of  
own soldiers upon parade. Some men are  
m commanders, "some achieve command, and  
me have command thrust upon them;" but  
am convinced that he who is not a soldier  
m, will never become one by education. As



Kent said of King Lear, "this man had in his countenance, which he would fain master—authority."

Before such a man it was not agreeable to appear on parade with a pair of black eyes. I heard the difficulties into which I had got with comment, and mine host was summoned to his bill, and cross examined. The old gentleman perused and dwelt upon it item by item. Some things he taxed. Not even a bottle of soda water escaped his eye or was allowed to be overcharged. He then settled it, and required if I was ready to depart.

"You have been expected at Portman Square for the last fortnight," said he. "We do not conceive where you had got to. I thought of putting you into the Hue-and-cry."

He listened to my account of my sojourn in London, and its consequences.

"The usual effects of youthful self-sufficiency," he remarked; "for the future, always follow your instructions. Had you come to my house as your father directed, all this would have been avoided."

"But I thought, Sir,——" I said.



"You thought," he interrupted, sharply, who gave you leave to think. You have chosen a profession, young man, in which the privilege of thinking will be spared you. Your mother wrote to me that you meant to make the army your profession. If so, you must eat, drink, and sleep, Sir, to the sound of the drum. What say you," he continued, opening the door, "shall we move off?"

"Am I to return then, Sir, with you to-night?" inquired, "had I not better remain at this hotel till to-morrow morning? I fear I shall do you to inconvenience, by coming thus suddenly."

"As you please, Mr. Blount," said he, drily; "but I think you have had enough of hotels for some time. My carriage is here, Sir, for the purpose of conveying you to my house, where you have been expected for the last night. I advise you to take advantage of it, unless you prefer this dirty public-house."

Behold me then, located in Portman Square; remember, for the present, of Sir Augustus Blount's family. The old gentleman was something of a philosopher, and his style of life was different from that of persons in his own

sphere. His ideas were totally at variance with the times he lived in, and having in early days been much in the wilds of America, the hardships of life incident to campaigning in that country had made him despise the luxuries of modern times and the state of high civilization at which we have arrived. As soon as he became accustomed to the doleful appearance I cut, and he discovered my disposition was not so wild and reckless as he had been led to expect, he condescended to unbend from his usual stiffness of manner, and we became good friends.

My father's marriage had highly disgusted him, and at first he rather visited the blame of it upon me, his son. He had himself been married whilst in the army, and had several daughters, pure in heart and beautiful in person. They were all married, and his wife long dead, so that he lived almost alone in the great metropolis. He had once been in Parliament, but gave up politics with disgust; and being very punctilious on points of honour as a Spanish grandee, he professed he could not understand the nice distinctions of Members of Parliament, and when honourable members, on the inquiry

ether imputed rascality is personal to themselves, and their adversary assures them that never intended to be personal, and the honour of the man is unimpeached; such examination, he allowed, was highly civilized, but somewhat unintelligible. Equally extraordinary it appear to him, on entering into fashionable society, to observe the state of high civilization, and the various distinctions there.

"They do these things quite different amongst the Sioux and the Pawnees," said he; "but they want civilization."

"The clubs in London," said he to me one day, as we were sitting over our coffee after dinner, for he never, even when he had company, and fuddled himself with wine; "the clubs are a nuisance and a bane, where men find every sort of selfish enjoyment. Society, such as I can just remember it in my early youth in England, is completely disorganized. A man is now happy at home, but all rush for the discomforts of a palace, in the shape of a club-house. Times are very much changed for the worse, or I perhaps fancy so. This seems to me to be the age of mediocrity: a most unamusing period. Whether it is that

a life in the woods has spoilt me for enjoyment, or whether my occupation being gone, even at my old age I still sigh for the march, the parade, the volleying discharge from wing along the blazing line, the embark and wafting of armed thousands upon the swelling tide, and all the circumstance of war I know not. But it seems to me that life has become exceedingly common-place. The generation seems rushing through life like a torrent; and even in fashionable life met with we go too fast.

“People now do as much (apparently without any enjoyment of life) in one week as used to do in a whole season. They run from house to house, from appointment to appointment, from dinner to rout, and from rout to ball, from opera to concert, and so on. They hurry on, Sir; their spirits become dissipated, and their health fails them. The best of us, overworked even in early youth, their energies are exhausted; and to a short life of constant excitement, succeeds perhaps a patched constitution through old age, or an early death. The females fly likewise for support during this *saute qui peut* scramble, to

port of wine, and other stimulants. The  
t medicine is obliged to clap them upon the  
x, and encourage them, or they sink. Tonics  
juleps, opium and liquors, are all put into  
sition, in order to restore their shattered  
es. Thank heaven! I, myself, was born  
re nerves came into fashion. Think, Sir,  
t our ancestors, even of the times of the  
y Monarch, would have thought of having  
their visiting-books from one to two thou-  
d names, and all these people to be called  
n, entertained and visited.

Look at the eagle velocity with which we  
el. Are we the more inclined for the road  
than before? Are our enjoyments the  
ter? I, myself, can leave my residence in  
country at eight o'clock in the morning,  
arrive in London at ten. The railway,  
ed, runs through my very park; but I do not  
sider myself a bit happier for that. On the  
rary, I am about to sell the estate of my  
fathers. I shall never go there again.  
king of the country, where are now the  
ts of the field, or what are they when you  
r into them?

I invited a neighbour of mine, the son of

an early friend, to stay with me, and go to my preserves. We had a *battue*, as it is called, and my poor pheasants and hares were slaughtered in three or four days' amusement. What would our ancestors, who followed the chase from sunrise to sunset, say now to one hundred and thirty brace in one day to one on the highlands, the sportsman merely looking and firing, with a troop of retainers in the background to load as fast as he discharged, and pick up the dead and wounded?

“Indeed, country life, as well as town life, has undergone no slight change in a few, or a few years. There also we find civilization and full progress. The middle classes now disengage themselves to take upon themselves the superintendence of the conduct of their dependants; the consequence is, an increase of immorality. In the houses the labourers are no longer admitted as inmates. The farmers are no longer the old English yeomen who used to keep up order and decorum, and hold themselves responsible in some sort for the good behaviour of their servants; and in lieu of devotion to the interests of employers, and love for the hearth in which they dwelt, the masters



w slight regard, insolence, carelessness, and under to complain of. All classes at the present y, too, are nearly dressed alike ; and the blackard who figures in the police report for picking ickets, the counter-skipper from the ribbon op in Regent Street, and the noble, are ually well clothed. Whilst my own daughter, e Countess of Bosworth, is closely copied in e fashion of her bonnet, gown, and even the le in which she braids her hair is imitated by r lady's maid ; ' Greasy Joan, too, who keels the t' outvies them both in the effort to keep on a par in elegance of apparel."

The army in which he had served so long was entirely devoted to, and often held forth on at subject ; but he seemed to sorrow over it, and e idea of interference with its discipline since e glorious campaigns of the Peninsula, and er grounds, drove him to a pitch of madness en he spoke of it.

The British infantry, he calculated, was short more than twenty thousand men, if it were to charge the duties assigned to it, even in ace, with any consideration for the soldier. e military authorities, he thought, deeply mpathized and lamented over their fellow

soldiers, "the unwearied and undefatigable fantry of the line," and would be willing to alleviate the unceasing pressure on them, occasioned by the inadequacy of their numbers, for the purposes of colonial service and home duties.

Thus, then, the old General and myself became exceedingly friendly, and before I had been a week under his roof, he had grown quite attached to my society. Our tastes seemed to suit exactly. He had never had a son, and I became one to him. I told him all my mishaps and misadventures in regard to my home and its disagreeables, and he vowed he would set all to rights when my father came to London, before I joined. He accompanied me to the Horse-Guards, when I attended the levee of the Commander-in-chief and the military secretary. It was gratifying to me to look upon men so renowned, whose "high deeds achieved of knightly fame" had extended from pole to pole; men of honour, bright as their own swords, the true metal to stamp chivalry's imprint upon.

At his own request, I had taken into my service the little boots of the hotel. I found in him the perfection of a valet; and managing



et acquainted with the domestics of Lord Hurricane, he frequently informed me how matters were progressing in Grosvenor Square; there, indeed, much had taken place to cause me uneasiness. The Duke of Hurricane, in a dreadful state of health, had been removed to his seat in Warwickshire, after the ball had at last been extracted; Miss Villeroy was with the Earl of Marston. Town had now become nearly empty, and the General and I had it all to ourselves. My father having returned from the continent, wrote me a severe letter upon my conduct whilst in town, refusing to advance me any further supply till after I had joined.

The old General bade me be of good cheer under these circumstances.

"Here is a cheque," said he, "for five hundred pounds to begin with. Meanwhile, I take this opportunity of telling you, that I have seen enough of your disposition and conduct to understand you perfectly, and like you extremely. I have five times as much as I can expend, and you may draw upon me whenever you wish for a supply. My three children, as you know, are all well married. The smallest son is the husband of the youngest, who

married a commoner, is ten thousand a-year. They want nothing of me; and I shall leave you the bulk of my property. To-morrow shall alter my will in your favour, we will then settle what you want for the present emergency, and on Saturday, you know, you are to set off for Ireland."

The goodness of the General was as unexpected as it was gratifying, and I returned my acknowledgments with tears in my eyes; and that I cared for the accession of fortune promised, but because I had found a friend who loved me, and seemed to understand my disposition.

It was on a lovely summer's evening, when the foregoing conversation took place. A few of those fashionables who had not yet left town were snatching a breath of air within the enclosure of Portman Square, and the General proposed that I should take a turn and smoke my cigar there with him. We sauntered up and down upon the grass for some time, discussing matters of business connected with our family concerns. At length, he expressed himself tired, and proposed returning within doors.

"You need not come home so early,"

id, looking at his watch ; "as it is now only  
n o'clock. Take this key, and let yourself  
I have given Goodwin, my man, leave to  
absent for a couple of days. To-morrow,  
y dear young friend," he added, "I shall put  
u in a position to defy the frowns of fortune,  
d the machinations of the enemies you have  
d me of. Your father, too, I have no doubt,  
ll come to his proper senses. I have always  
d some influence with him, since he served  
der my command in Spain. To-morrow, we  
ll have a morning devoted to business. I  
pect my solicitor to breakfast, and we will  
erwards vary the scene, by driving out, and  
ning at the Star, at Richmond. Good night,  
y boy. We'll rise betimes, and breakfast at  
ght, to-morrow."

Oh never

Shall sun that morrow see !

A presentiment of evil haunted me as the  
General left the enclosure ; and I stood and  
atched till the street-door closed upon him,  
d shut him from my sight. I never saw  
n again in life. In his secure hour, "in the  
ad waste and middle of the night," my new

valet, the little wretch I had hired from Chaucer-like hotel, in Holborn, arose and the old soldier's throat from ear to ear, making off with all the plate in the house, and snatching up all the ready money he could lay his hands on. The immortal Shakspeare shows us murderers of various dispositions ; some possessing the organ of destructiveness " fully developed " and others who are but the instruments of more bloody-minded rascals. From the crowned king to the crook-backed tyrant, who can coolly murderize upon the aspiring blood of Lancaster and sink in the ground, and who confesses to the accomplishment of being able to smile, even as he deals with his victim, to the common thieves, such as Dighton, Forrest, and Tyrell, from the noble Thane (for he is a noble gentleman, even in his worst of moods, and the beautiful things he gives utterance to in his sorrow and in his anger, almost persuade us to forgive him his misdeeds, sorely tempted and paltreated with as he is, by fiends both fair and foul), from the noble Thane, then, to the shag-eared villain " weary with disasters," and ready to set his life on any chance, " to mend it, or be rid on it." Shakspeare, I say, shows us murderers,

brings them before us with a reality and fidelity of description, as Shakspeare alone can picture. We see them "in habit as they lived;" fellows by the hand of nature marked, quoted, and signed, to do "the deed of shame." Nay we can see the bloody business clearly brought before us, and whilst "o'er the one half world,"

Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse  
The curtained sleep.

Wither'd murder  
Alarm'd by his sentinel, the wolf  
Whose howls his watch  
With Tarquin ravishing strides, towards his design  
Moves like a ghost.

From the "best to the worst of the cut-throats," we can, indeed, imagine their very outward favour, and almost "hear the stones prate of their whereabouts;" and we can as easily reconcile the bloody deeds of the iron men of those times, as we can conceive the more atrocious and disgusting scoundrels of our own more modern days, whose professional talents were exercised in the well-got-up plot of plastering up the mouths and nostrils of itinerant Italian monkey-boys, in order to prepare them good

subjects for the dissecting-table. All the men seem, by the hand of nature, "quoted as designed to do a deed of shame." But, that miserable specimen, the little boots of the hotel, whom I had adopted for a valet, and whose dimensions, in any thick sight, were almost invisible, who seemed all alacrity to serve, and who, as is somewhere described, a good-intentioned servant had a where-shall-I-go, what-shall-I-do-for-you sort of countenance, that made it quite a pleasure to employ him, that this "thin-faced gull," this "forcible little," this "atomy," should have found his hand and hand to attack, even when asleep, this noble-looking old soldier, whose "silver shaven" was laced with his golden blood," lay with his thigh gashed from ear to ear—that this little wretch, who must have known, had he but faltered in the attempt, his victim would have smote him down, as easily as he would have brushed a spider from the wall—that this weak and defenceless minister should have done so horrible a deed, was to me so extraordinary, that I refused at first to credit the suspicion.

Certes, I must confess to the opinion of little men generally having souls of vast magnitude.

nitude; and we frequently see, I think, the smaller man the greater and more valorous hero. Witness, for instance, the wives they take. Nay, it is no uncommon thing to see some "poor palsied elder" overawed, and overwived by a strapping Amazon, who might fairly be considered a fitting match for Colebrand the giant, or some other mighty man, rather than thus manned by an aglet, more fit to be worn in her cap than follow at her heels.

That the fac-simile of the drawer, Francis, had done this deed, was soon apparent enough; for he was hunted down, and taken at Liverpool, with some of the General's property upon him, and about two hundred pounds' worth of money, being the produce of what he had hastily turned into coin.



## CHAPTER VIII.

Oh, boys, this story  
The world may read in me. My body's mark  
With Roman swords : and my report was once  
First with the best of note.

THIS fresh calamity did, indeed, completely unnerve me, and I felt myself a regular Boal Chico. Such was the state of depression and discomfort into which this event threw me, that death itself would have been hailed by me as a welcome messenger.

"Fresh hopes," however, says the Thomson, "are hourly sown in furrow'd brow, and youth is the season in which, however we may be cast down, we must quickly rally. My London season was over; the difficulties which I had so unwarily got, General d'Acre luckily emancipated me from; I obtained a



days' more leave from the Horse-guards, and my father having arrived in town the night before I was to start, we once more met.

I waited on him at Mivart's Hotel, in Lower-Brook-Street. He saw me alone, although the whole Levison party were there with him. The late events of my own career had not rendered me a bit more amiable in his eyes; added to which, his young wife was now in that promising way which gave him hopes of an increase to his family.

"You are much altered, Sir," said he, as soon as I entered the room; "I scarcely should know you. What a life is this you have been leading here! When do you join your regiment? or do you now mean to do so at all?"

"It is my intention, Sir," said I, "to set off for Ireland, to-morrow."

"Have you followed my instructions, and asked for an exchange into the infantry?"

"I have not, Sir," I replied.

"Why?"

"I do not like the infantry, and have never contemplated the necessity of exchanging into it. I would rather try—"

"So had not I," said he, interrupting me.  
"To be brief, Sir, I cannot make you an allowance sufficient for that service, and shall therefore myself apply for an exchange. As you have got every thing requisite, you must however now join the — Hussars. But, at the same time, India must be the future field in which you must hope for renown."

Our interview soon ended, and with a somewhat heavy heart, I set off for the Emerald Isle, in the Bristol mail. Arrived at Bristol the next morning, I embarked on board a steamer, for Cork. It was rather a raw and gusty morning, I recollect, when we put forward, and before we were a couple of hours old at sea, blew a perfect hurricane. It was my first impression of the mighty deep, and a tolerably deep one it made upon me. There were several youths who, like myself, were about to join the different regiments on board. One of these was due to an infantry regiment, then stationed at Cork, I may as well mention, as I subsequently grew better acquainted with him, and the companionship led to no beneficial result; on the contrary, I became involved in a considera-

share of difficulty in his cause. There was also among us youth, an old and weather-beaten veteran, a man who had seen so much service in the East and West Indies, and who had followed the trade of arms so long, that his careworn body's dissolution seemed but to await his rejoining the corps to which he belonged, in order that the volleying musketry might sound a requiem for him. Most of the passengers were so unwell, with the roughness of the weather, that they were fain to seek the cabin. The old veteran, myself, and three others, sheltering ourselves beneath our military cloaks, held converse upon deck. A sudden pitch of the vessel threw the old veteran from his seat, and sent him sprawling to the side. He was so weak, that he could not arise, and I staggered across and lifted him up.

"Thanks, Sir, thanks," said he. "My usual luck—it has happened to the weakest man in the ship. Ah! gentlemen, in me you see a miserable remnant of humanity; one whose career is almost run. Hardship hath done its work upon my poor body—dissipation hath done thrice the work of hardship. Rich sauces, generous wines,

and the spicy viands of the East and West have ta'en their turn upon me; climate, disease, and villanous drugs have helped completion; and more than one of the bulwarks of the Peninsula have found their billets among my muscles, veins, and arteries. I have been upon sick leave, Sir, now a whole year; finding the enemy in force upon my constitution, I resolved to cut the medical business and their infernal examinations, and rejoin my old corps die as I have lived, 'with business on my back.'

"I'm going to the old fiftieth, Sir, to give the ghost, and only hope I shall be permitted to reach Fermoy, that I may again see mine comrades, and the regiment once more parade; and then the sooner this carcass returns to its mother earth the better."

"You despond, Sir," said I, "you'll recover if you keep up your spirits. The sight of your old companions in arms will cheer you."

"Thank ye," he said, languidly, "thank ye, so the Great Medicine in London told me. 'Keep your mouth closed,' said he, 'and avoid the bottle, and you'll recover.' But, Lord, Sir,

never could withstand temptation. I'm the martyr of indigestion ; and the moment I touch brandy, I'm in the torments of the damned. Brandy and water is all I live upon ; my medical man allowed me but three slices of dry toast daily, and a glass of Madeira ; but I know I shall commit an indiscretion when the nausea of this voyage is over. I'm as sure to eat as to land if we ever do land—for the weather does not seem inclined to mend. The captain looks anxious, and the sailors are silent and solemn—sure sign we shall have a bad night on't, gentlemen. If I could find one or two of the men to help me down below, I should be thankful. Curse the sea, say I, for I never see a ship now, but it reminds me of the weary months I have spent on board the tubs of transports, in which we used to be sent out, and wrecked in former days. Well, gentlemen, since you say you are just joining your different regiments I wish you joy ; it's a glorious profession ; I've lived in it many years, and passed my time not so unpleasantly."

"I've heard," said the youngster, before mentioned, "that it's necessary to fight a duel on first joining, Sir. How is that to be managed

genteelly, and without giving offence in the corner. I should wish to do like others. Must I tread upon some officer's favourite corn, or had I better wait for a gentleman to tweak me the nose? It is all one to me;—equal to either fortune."

The veteran looked at the youth askance. "Necessary to do what, Sir?" said he; "fight a duel! Young man, you had better not join with that idea impressed upon your mind, or you will find yourself in a scrape, perhaps, before you are very old in your regiment."

"How so?" said the youth, who was something of a boaster in his style and manner. "I suppose, I can fight my way out of it, if I get into a scrape? I'm not altogether unpractised, and can touch off a blue-bottle fly at a man's proboscis at twelve paces, with ease."

"You will find it difficult to get an opportunity of doing so," returned the veteran, "if you are known to join with such sentiments and intentions. You will be voted a nuisance in the corner and cut accordingly. Take my advice, young man, look upon your brother officers as friends, not targets for your pistol practice. You will find



fore you have been many years in the army, plenty of opportunities of displaying your valour, without seeking it in the mess-room. That man's an arrant coward," added the veteran to me, "I'd stake my life upon

The youth laughed: he wished to be thought cavalier of the first water, and to make impression upon his auditors. I soon afterwards helped our veteran friend to his cot, where, after administering a glass of his favourite beverage, I left him to his repose.

The night was, as he had prognosticated, a high one. So much so, that the fires were put out by the seas, which washed into the vessel, and the passengers went to prayers, and all next day we lay at the mercy of the winds and waves, like a helpless log upon the waters. At last we made the Cove, and landing, hired some jaunting cars, and arrived safely at Cork the morning after.

In the coffee-room of one of the hotels, our veteran friend, myself, and military fellow passengers, sat down to enjoy the first comfortable meal we had taken since we left

Bristol. Tea, coffee, and new laid eggs, are most delightful treat after the discomfort of a storm at sea. Cork is, moreover, famous for salmon, deliciously dressed, and served up on sheets of clean writing paper.

Our veteran friend had distrusted his power of forbearance, and albeit, he particularly ordered the gossoon to bring him nothing but a small slice of dry toast, no sooner did the toast and coffee, with the other creature comforts appear, than after eyeing them for a few minutes, he drew himself to our table, and commenced eating like a famished wolf, or a half-starved tiger.

"This salmon will be my bane," said he, and he stopped to take breath. "The first time I ever landed at Cork, thirty years ago, I remember breakfasting on it, in this very room. Twelve times I have been across the Atlantic since that, and yet I remember it as if it were but yesterday. Delicious treat! Waiter, more salmon here, more muffins, here, another decanter and more brandy, my stomach is like a rebraced brass drum, Sir, but I cannot halt now. Fermoy," he continued, dolefully; "I shall



never see thee after all; farewell 50th, I shall die of salmon! Help me to another slice, gentlemen. Thankye! that will do; yes, I shall die of salmon, and George Chacot will get the step."

"There's many a true word spoken in jest," says the vulgar proverb. Captain Wornout positively died from eating that salmon. He was seriously ill before he left the table, and in two days he died of inflammation of the intestines. By that time, however, I had reached Limerick, and become acquainted with my brother officers of the —th Hussars.

First joining a regiment is an event of no slight importance in a man's life. The —th was a crack corps, as it is termed, and consequently was officered by men of rank and fortune, gentlemen in every sense of the term; and by them I was received with marks of kindness and good feeling. At least half of them were connected with the nobles of the land, and the remainder were the sons of your fine old English Esquires;—men, whose princely allowances would necessarily make them unwilling to follow any other but the profession of arms. Amongst gen-

tleman of this rank, then, I commenced military career; and being commanded by an officer, who was like a father to the whole regiment, and at the same time a strict disciplinarian, and, moreover, who had seen much service in the last war, I soon began to forget my late mishaps and misfortune, and to relish the excitement and splendour of the soldier's life.

Our duties in Ireland were not much relished by my companions; to me, however, all was delightful, because all was new. Whether, therefore, in the pursuit of duty, I was engaged with the troop in the capture of a still-anther in the bogs, or driving pigs, cows, and sheep upon a tithing expedition, or keeping the streets of some town during an election riot, or escorting some wretched prisoner to the gallows, or on foot, and mounting guard whilst the functionary of the law performed his office upon the scaffold, amidst the infuriated pisantry, I was equally content to find myself obeying my orders, and playing the part assigned to me with true duty.

Six months after I joined, we were ordered to England, to the great delight of the whole

regiment, and shortly after, our kettledrums and trumpets were sounding through the streets of Manchester. At Manchester, we found our presence of some slight use in keeping the turbulent artificers occasionally from half demolishing the town, for which service we had the favour of meeting with the dowered daughters of some of the millocrats, and dancing with them at their soulless and dull balls. We then rung the changes upon almost all the great manufacturing towns in that part of the kingdom; giving occasional detachments wherever any little outbreak made the presence of a troop necessary. And one fine morning, I found myself in command of a small party which had furnished a detachment in a village consequent upon several acts of incendiarism, and marching to join the main body, that day expecting to arrive at York.

It is one of the peculiarities of a soldier's life, that he can look back upon more homes, than the man of any other profession. The service necessarily makes him a welcome sojourner in so many delightful places, in which he becomes attached, not only to the inhabitants,

but to the localities around, that each appears the spot most favoured by nature containing the most amiable of residents. intimate of most families of condition in neighbourhood, and admitted more into bosom of such family than any other visitor, he is generally the favourite of household; welcomed by the elders, but assuredly a person of gentility and education and taking precedence amongst the younger more thoughtless, the lovely, and the gay. the chivalry of his appearance, (with horse and weapon to wear) and the devil care easy and careless life he professes. being the case, he becomes, if not professed the lover, at least the friend and confidant of every bevy of pretty lasses in every town or village he stays six months at, and remembers in after-life a little romance connected with every such quarter. Then comes the march, and the new scene, just as he had begun to feel himself the intimate of the good folks he must so abruptly say farewell to, and by whom he is regarded with the same kindly feelings. Then, as I said, the fresh quarter, the new acquaintance

the like endeavour at making himself an agreeable guest, with generally the same success.

The cavalry have more of this than the infantry; as, during twenty years of a man's life in the dragoons, he stands a chance, what with outbreaks and disturbances of one kind or other, to visit in turn, almost all the towns and villages in England with his troop of free lances.

And who can wonder at this feeling of good-will towards him of the chivalrous post and laced jacket? who can be surprised if the eye of the loveliest of the sex should glance a far-off look, when some lord of sash and epaulette is found amidst the gay and festive scene, since the hand which has sought the honour of a set, and so gently leads the dance, can also wield the broadsword for protection of those halls of dazzling light, and rein the fiery steed in full career, like a Mameluke?

The amusing life of this sort, which for the last six or seven months I had been leading, had in a great measure obliterated many of the disagreeables I had before been mixed up

in, and I began to feel myself altogether a different person. The last place I had been resident with my detachment, was Ripon, Yorkshire, and the morning's march lay through the celebrated watering-place, Harrogate.

## CHAPTER IX.

Away, you cut-purse rascal ! you filthy bung, away !  
By this wine, I'll thrust my knife in your mouldy chaps,  
an you play the sauncy cuttle with me. Away, you  
bottle-ale rascal !—since when I pray you, sir ?—What,  
with two points on your shoulder ? Much.

You are a gentleman, and a gamester, Sir—

I confess both ; they are both the varnish of a complete man.

SHAKSPERE.

HARROWGATE was in its palmy days when I visited it. At that period, half the rank and fashion of England were to be found at the various hotels, situate upon that Scotchified and barren-looking common, and a more delightful and altogether amusing watering-place it would be difficult to imagine. Most of the great sporting men of the day were also to be found at Harrowgate



during the season, and consequently among the other diversions and modes of passing away the time, high play was constantly resorted to by many of the visitors. Indeed it was no uncommon thing for the servants of the hotels to find the tables still full with players, when at early dawn they came to set the house in order. In fact, Harrowgate with its delightful balls, its continual round of gaiety, its parties of pleasure to the different places of note around, and the interest consequent upon the various celebrated men upon the turf who used to hold their periodical visitations there, was one of the most amusing places of resort in the kingdom. As I arrived at the entrance of the village of High Harrowgate from Ripon, I was met by an orderly dragoon, who had been despatched with an official letter from the commanding officer desiring me to halt with my detachment upon further orders at this watering place, and I found myself billeted at the house I had in my boyish days so frequently heard of, "The Dragon at Harrowgate."

It was about the hour of noon when



balted my power before the little terrace upon which some of the company were assembled.

The arrival of a party of dragoons upon the march, who were to be billeted in the village, the officer quartering himself at their home, was an event which of course produced quite a sensation amongst the idlers of a fashionable resort; and all the circumstance and appearance of my "plump of spears" lent me so much favour in the eyes of the assemblage, that I found myself quite the lion of the hotel.

It was on the evening of my first day at Harrowgate, that the tables being drawn, it was "idlesse all." The gentlemen were gradually leaving their wine-flagons in the dining-room, and joining the ladies, who, seated at a long table, were preparing to make tea. At the Green Dragon at Harrowgate there was generally a sort of *prima donna*, who led the ton, without whose approval a new-comer would be likely to find his stay rendered not only unpleasant, but even (if an upstart *parvenu*) impossible. Many an unfortunate wight was

fain to retire from the aristocratic Dragon these days, and betake himself to the Manchester Warehouse, as the Crown Inn is called.

After going through my stable duties I lounged into the tea-room, and made my way to the upper end. About a dozen ladies were generally employed in the business of tea-making, each having her little tray before her, furnished with appliances and means to furnish forth some twenty applicants for the beverage; thus managed, it was an introduction to company, and made the whole party intimate as one family.

The Marchioness of Richborough was seated at the end of the room as I approached. Beside her was another lady, who officiated in pouring out tea and coffee to the various applicants who bowed at her shrine. The Marchioness was a beautiful woman, of some six or seventy-two years of age, with the form of a goddess and the brow of a queen.

The clatter of my approach, being in unison with the eye of the Marchioness upon me, drew the eye of her Ladyship, necessarily I

honoured by the observance of that portion of the company immediately around her.

It was a critical moment for the new arrival, if he cared for being in good odour amongst the assemblage, for the Marchioness of Richborough was the leader of the ton. Had her Ladyship bent but a supercilious eye-brow upon the cornet, after putting her glass to her eye, he would have been voted not the thing in her presence, and perhaps cut by the company. As it was, she desired her lovely friend to pour out a cup of coffee for the officer of the ——th, and desiring her husband the Marquis, who was conversing with some ladies near, to invite me to the table, made room for me beside herself.

Although I knew neither the name nor the high rank of the beautiful creature I was sitting beside, we were as intimate in five minutes as if we had been acquainted for five years. The high bred and the exalted in rank sometimes dare to overstep the *triste* manners of English society, and permit those who they approve to a close and quick intimacy. My hussar jacket was in some sort my passport, and my appearance and good mien seconded that; so

that the Marchioness condescended to be at and entertained me with the history of two or three of the assembled company.

"You shall know the natives of the scene you are cast upon," she said. "That lady, the five raw-boned, tartar-faced daughter of the wife of Sir Mungo McTurk. She has visited this table d'hôte six several seasons and each season has got off one of her fair daughters. There is a determination to succeed about McTurk that is most praiseworthy, and she will succeed again accordingly. That's her visitor, the heavy-looking youth who is seated beside her youngest unmarried. That odd-looking, farmer-like man, who is railing against the lady making tea for him, calling the hotel a hovel, and all assembled rogues and vagabonds is the celebrated Joe Armstrong, a great man on the turf, and descended from one of the noble families in Yorkshire. Beside him, silent, untempered-looking, and unassuming, is the quizzical of Queensferry. He is quietly waiting for St. Ledger, that he may lose his custom of a thousand before he returns to town. The lady on the other side, with the melancholy-looking

daughters, is the celebrated Lady Merrimoth, the great whist-player. She has been known to sit up, with slight intermission, for a whole week at a time here. To-night you will see her with bank notes in her lap piled nearly to her chin, and setting the fee-simple of an estate, upon the turn-up of a card. The two young ladies, her offspring, she generally dispatches to boarding-school at hand, whilst the season lasts. To-night they have a half holiday, in consequence of our intended ball at the Dragon. Her career is given in a line of the immortal couple, 'a youth of folly, an old age of cards.'

'That old gentleman, who looks so nervous and diffident, with the pigtail, powdered hair, and old-world coat, is a retired member of your profession, a half-pay dragoon. He joined the third dragoons in the year 1760, and, however you may smile and doubt, it is a well-known fact, that his mother brought him to the regiment, and herself placed him in charge of the colours. He was an only son, and the sweet youth, being heir to a large patrimony here in Derbyshire, took a fancy for the profession of arms. Being a perfect cousin Slender, he was accompanied as I have mentioned; remained in

the regiment some six or seven years, and, the breaking out of the war, his mother 'sent him out', and fetched him back to Mostyn Hall. There sits 'the deliberate simpleton,' a perfect representative of Sir Walter Scott's Dumbdick. "I can no more," said the Marchioness, preparing to rise. "The rest are all people of some name in the country, and doubtless will devote themselves for your especial amusement and edification. Flora, my love, come," she said to her companion, "we must even prepare for the coming assembly, as I suppose it will be expected of us to make our appearance."

Saying this, my fair friend arose, and left the tea-table, followed by the nymph, her friend.

"Pray who is that lady?" I inquired of a military-looking man standing near.

"Is it me you are asking?" returned Mr. O'Doherty. "Come, that's droll any how; you, too, been as intimate with her as if you had been her next of kin. By the powers! I've been here at the Dragon three weeks, and sitting at the table only six from her, and never exchanged much as may I have the honour of wine with your Ladyship? By the Lord! I've never been able to conciliate an acquaintance in all the



time, and you've been learning the history of all the folks in the house from her own sweet, condescending lips, (lips that I have never kissed, nor ever shall), and now ask me her name. Sure it's funning you are. Why it is the Marchioness of Richborough, and her friend, Lady Flora Clinton. By Jasus ! man, you're in luck ; by the same token, she's taken a fancy to your spurs and sabretash."

"Her Ladyship's something caustic in her remarks upon us to-night, Major," said a Scotch Baronet, who had been seated near us, and who now joined in the conversation : "she is o'er fond of the tables hersel, to be so severe upon Lady Merrimoth. Troth but she's like enough hersel to make the Marquis's woods feel the axe, an she lose as mickle every season as she has done this. Gad ! but she's a right vent'rous player. Heard ye, mon, o' the match she's to play the night ?"

"By the powers you say true," returned the other, "it is to-night she plays, and by my conscience, it's near the hour."

As these gentlemen carried on their discourse now in an under tone I left my place, and the company now also beginning to disperse, I strolled

out into the village. On my return, seeing billiard-room lighted up, I entered it. The room, which those who have ever frequented the Dragon will remember is at one end of the terrace, was on this occasion filled with company, who sat and stood almost two deep around it. A match of some importance I therefore conjectured was being played, and elbowing my way to the front, was sufficiently astonished to see my beautiful friend the Marchioness one of the players; whilst the Marquis, her spouse, standing beside the marker, officiated for him in the duty of scoring up the game.

The match was for a large sum I found on inquiry, and the opponent of the fair Marchioness was a professed gamester, who had somehow in the liveliness of conversation inveigled her into it; having come from London with his associates, for the very purpose of pigeon-picking the lady. He was, besides, a gentleman who prided himself vastly upon his reputation as a duellist, having shot several opponents in various affairs of honour in which he had been engaged. The indelicacy of playing billiards with a lady for large stakes, who had evidently little more skill in the mace than the bagatelle



had given her, was great ; but it was  
ent to me, as well as to the whole room, that  
leg was taking advantage of her ignorance  
the game to win to a large amount. The  
quis seeming, however, amused as he in-  
ed his lively spouse, and the attendan-  
pany appearing unwilling to interfere, I  
ained quietly for a space to watch the  
e.

A hundred pounds to five, I make this  
rd," said Captain Surecard.

I'll take it," said the Marchioness.

Not so," said one of the spectators ; " he  
miss it. Cry off, Lady Richborough."

Silence, Sir!" cried the Captain, angrily.  
er Ladyship wants no advice of yours ; she  
accepted my bet. I'll not allow any person  
interfere with my game."

he Captain played, and won the hazard.

A foul stroke, Sir," said I immediately.

A what?" cried the Captain, turning fiercely  
d. "Who spoke when I was playing?  
you?"

I spoke, Sir," said I, pushing to the front ;  
said that was a foul stroke. I repeat the  
ervation."

The Captain stood aghast for the moment. At length he threw down his cue, and strode towards me.

"I'll bet you a hundred guineas, Sir," said he, "you don't utter another word whilst I am playing."

"Who shall say me nay?" returned I, smiling at his face of ire.

The Marchioness laughed outright, for the scene perfectly delighted her.

The Captain, livid with rage, continued to gaze at me as if ruin leaped from his eyes.

"Proceed, Sir, with your game," said I, "the table waits. I'll take your bet; done's word. A hundred guineas upon it."

The Captain strode to the table, took up his cue, and was about to strike his ball; as he did so, I stepped up to the table.

"Another foul stroke, by heaven!" said I.

The *leg* threw down his cue, and turned like lightning towards me, whilst three or four of the company started from their seats.

"I believe, Sir, I am winner," said I; "my bet was a cool hundred."

"Your card, Sir!" roared the duellist; "Heaven, I'll teach you a lesson for this!"

I handed him a card immediately.

"Tis well," said he; "look to yourself, young man, your life is spanned. I am Captain Surecard."

In saying this he evidently thought that the very sound of his awfully celebrated name would strike me all of a heap; but, as at that time I had neither heard of his name nor his skill, it failed to do so.

"Look you to yourself, Captain Surecard," said I, growing warm with the debate, "and somewhat moderate your tone, or perchance I may teach you a lesson here which will cool your vehemence. Meanwhile, respect the presence of the lady, Sir. Continue your game, and beware how you attempt foul play, or by heaven I'll unmask you the instant I see you take advantage."

The duellist was completely confounded, his jaw dropped as he stared the astonishment he felt, and turning he resumed his cue.

"You shall hear, Sir," said he, with shut teeth, "soon as I have finished my match. Meanwhile, do not leave the room."

The game proceeded, and to the delight of the lively Marchioness, such was the nervous

agitation consequent upon the rage and discomfort of her opponent, that (as he gave large odds) owing to his missing almost every hazard, the tables were completely turned, and she won every game.

"You'll be at the ball," said she, as she quitted the room with her husband. "Come quickly, I'm uneasy at this business. Leave the room with us now."

"I'll follow your Ladyship," said I, when without the room, "in a few minutes."

"Lord Richborough," continued the Marchioness, addressing her husband, "remain with Mr. Blount. The chances are, that being strange here, he may need a friend. I'm sorry, for my sake, you have involved yourself in this broil, Mr. Blount; but his Lordship must see you through it. Appoint him your friend."

The good-natured nobleman, who, it appeared, was in the habit of being ruled by his more clever spouse, instantly relinquished the arm of the Marchioness, and taking mine, we turned to re-enter the billiard room. As I did so I was confronted by Major O'Doherty, who instantly accosted me.

"I am commissioned, Sir," said he, "by my

friend Captain Surecard, to desire you will give him an instant meeting; since nothing but your blood can wash out the public insult you have offered him. Name your friend."

"I'll speak to the valiant Captain himself," said I, moving towards him.

"Pardon me, Sir," said the Major, roughly seizing me by the arm; "that's irregular: I cannot allow you to do so."

"Remove your hand, Sir," said I, "instantly from my arm, or I'll knock you down."

"D——n!" said the Major, "do you address this language to me? You shall answer this, Sir."

"When I have satisfied your friend," said I, "I'll attend to you, Major O'Doherty;" saying which, followed by the Marquis, I re-entered the billiard-room.

It was now in some little confusion, and the company in high debate. Captain Surecard had many gambling partizans present, but the majority of the company were sporting gentlemen, who, formed into little knots, discussed the recent transaction. The Captain and his friends were meantime loud in debate; and

walking to the end of the room where they were, I confronted my man.

"You have sent a friend to me, Sir," said I, "have you not?"

"I have, Sir," roared the duellist; "I demand an instant meeting."

"Doubtless; the sooner we meet the better that we may do so speedily, as I believe I am the winner of a hundred pounds, I demand its instant payment."

"I shall not do so," returned the *leg*. "Give me satisfaction for the affront you have offered. Here is my friend; appoint one on your side instantly, before worse befall you."

"Not till you pay me the money won," replied, coolly.

"To the devil with your winnings!" said the Captain, working himself into a rage; "it was no bet. Meet me, Sir, or by heavens! I will put your name in this very billiard-room, and send you over Harrowgate as a poltroon. Marker, pen, ink and paper, by heaven, I'll stick you up here this instant, unless you accept my challenge."

"And I, Sir," said I, "in return for your intended favour, beg to inform you, that if you

put pen to paper to do so, I will beat you into a jelly with this billiard cue I hold in my hand. Your blackguardism will not serve with me, Captain Surecard, nor shall you leave this spot, until you have acknowledged or paid the debt of honour you have incurred. After which, I will render you satisfaction across this billiard-table if it be your wish. Suffice it, Sir, I remember you now. A certain Captain Catchflat was once your companion, if I mistake not. Think not, Sir," I continued, "that I mean to evade a meeting; for as soon as you have settled this debt, I will appoint Lord Richborough my friend."

The duellist was struck. His overbearing style left him, and he turned to consult his friends. Meanwhile, I placed myself near the door, in order to intercept his retreat; for I determined to make an example of this fellow, who, I firmly believed, was as great a villain as his some-time companion, my London friend. Several of the gentlemen present now gathered around me, and upheld the course I was pursuing.

The Marquis, meanwhile, who had quietly watched the proceeding in his easy, good-tem-



pered way, which formed a striking contrast to my excited style, addressed me, taking my arm, and leading me aside, as he did so.

"You have overturned my plans entirely, young man," he said, "by this proceeding. It was my intention that this bullying scoundrel should fleece my wife; for which purpose I sanctioned his playing the match you interrupted. The Marchioness of Richborough has suddenly contracted a violent passion for play, which will, unless nipped in the bud, ruin her health and happiness. It has been my system whilst here at Harrowgate, to allow of her being plucked and pigeoned by these watering-place sharpers in every possible way, in order to show her the folly of the thing. *Voilà!* it is now finished for the present. This business interrupts it, and we must arrange that at once. It is unfortunate as it stands, because as an affair must now take place, I ought naturally to stand as principle, instead of second."

"My Lord," said I, "I beg ten thousand pardons for my intemperate zeal. I certainly am, without exception, the most unlucky dog in the universal world."



"Say no more," said his Lordship, laughing. "The course you have pursued with this man is the right one. He must pay you first, that's concluded."

Major O'Doherty now approached ; upon which, I instantly introduced the Marquis as my friend.

"Does Cornet Blount still demand payment of the bet he asserts he has won, before he consents to meet Captain Surecard ?" said the Major.

"Decidedly, Major," said the Marquis. "He demands instant payment of the hundred pounds he has won ; after which, I am ready, on his part, to arrange a meeting."

"That, then, is the sum," said the Major, placing in my hand bank-notes to the amount. "See, Sir, that they are right."

I took the notes ; and after counting, returned them to the hands of Major O'Doherty.

"It is sufficient," said I. "Give back the money to your principal, with this further message, that although I know him to be a practised gamester, and an abominable cheater, for my own satisfaction, not his, mind you, after

what has passed, I choose to grant him a meeting. The Marquis of Richborough will arrange matters with you."

So saying, I turned upon my heel, and entered the billiard-room.

When I entered the hall of the hotel, I found a servant, apparently waiting me, who delivered a note from the Marchioness, desiring me to favour her with a visit in her sitting-room.

I found her ready dressed for the ball; playing with her only child, before she dismissed it to its bed. Anything more lovely than the mother and child, you might search sea and land without being able to discover. The child was about four years old, and beautiful as Cupid; while the mother might have formed a study in voluptuous beauty for the Queen of Love herself.

She rose to receive me as soon as I entered.

"I am glad you are come," said she; "I have been very uneasy. My somewhat intricate match with yonder gambler, has led you into a serious scrape, I fear. Tell me, is it amicably arranged. I know Richborough so well, and his tact and management, that I am sure

he has settled everything without disagreeables of any sort."

Of course, I assured her that she was right.

"It will be a lesson to me," said she; "and in order that I may not suffer in your good opinion, you shall know the folly which made me commit the further indiscretion of playing a public match in the billiard-room of the Dragon. My throne here is troubled, like all other thrones, by an adverse faction. Lady Macdonald heads this cabal; and being surrounded by a clique of sanctified tabbies, and *parvenu beaux*, they carp at all my doings, rail at my followers, and hold up their hands in horror at all the amusements by which I seek to keep my subjects from *ennui*, and ease the anguish of the torturing hours of a watering-place. The fact of my having once or twice lost a few paltry hundreds at whist, has been so animadverted upon, that, in order to show my contempt for their narrow ideas, I resolved to play a match at billiards for a couple of hundred pounds, and thus 'out-Herod Herod' in recklessness of their contempt."

The Marquis now entering the room, I arose

to accompany him, in order to hear the of his arrangement of time and place.

"There is no occasion for us to quit apartment," said he, answering my look motion. "Luckily for you there is to be a fight. The company attendant at the invitation of that eccentric Joe Armstrong, have decided that your antagonist should be expelled from the hotel, together with his associates. The publicity your affair has given them, has completely blown them. It is therefore settled that you leave the Dragon forthwith, or they will be kicked out; and a committee have settled that you are *not* to meet Captain Surecard. If you do, you will yourself be expelled. As my friend I have settled, therefore, everything for your part honourably and properly."

Greatly relieved, I poured forth my thanks to the Marquis, who retired to prepare for the ball-room, committing the Marchioness to his escort, and taking his boy in his arms.

## CHAPTER X.

The beginning, the middle, the end of love, is nothing but sorrow, vexation and misery.

ANON.

Still flows the tide of my unhappiness,  
The stars shoot mischief.

OLD PLAY.

AN affair of this sort naturally cemented my intimacy with the Marchioness of Richborough, whose lovely manners, innocence and beauty, made her a dangerous companion to a young man of my disposition. Although I could have sworn, by Cupid's strongest bow, "by his best arrow with the golden head," that no face or form could ever have driven the impression of Miss Villeroy from my heart, I fear the lovely Marchioness was for the time all powerful, and that I thought not, whilst in her society, of my former vows.

O Heaven ! were man but constant he were perfect  
That one error fills him with faults.

Suffice it, that no party of pleasure was for  
no amusement projected, in which I was  
her companion and aid-de-camp. To be  
and not to love, was not to be mortal.  
although this heavenly paragon hung upon  
arm during our walks in the day, danced  
me at night, and selected me as her partner  
every amusement she was engaged in, where  
of love was in our hearts, there was no  
of it crossed our lips.

I loved and was beloved again  
that was apparent to me from a thousand  
and tokens, which lovers as surely discover  
that they live and move.

As is generally the case in such cases  
the world saw it but him who was most  
interested ; and the good-natured and amiable  
Marquis, finding his lovely wife so well attended  
and so happy, set off to see his horse  
for the St. Ledger, and lose his money  
Doncaster.

It was on the third day after his departure  
that Lady Richborough and myself, watching  
the splendour of the setting sun, were sitting

upon the turf, amidst the trees and shrubs in the gardens of Plumpton. Those who have ever visited Harrowgate will remember this lovely spot ; the gardens of Plumpton being one of the places always shewn to the visitors.

The Marchioness had headed a pic-nic party there that day, some few individuals of which had left, and others were sauntering and amusing themselves in different parts of the grounds, just before they returned homewards. The Marchioness and myself were seated upon a verdant bank which overlooked the lake ; a romantic legend was attached to the place, which was called the Lover's leap. Something of the story I remembered, and pointed out to my companion how, in bye-gone days, a youthful hunter, in leaping upon a jutting fragment of rock, which was detached from the promontory we sat on, and at the same time held his blood-hounds in the leash, (the dogs having refused the leap,) dragged him backwards in the attempt, and before the eyes of his beloved he was dashed against the rocks, and drowned in the lake.



The romance of the story and the beauty of the scene delighted us. The only charm my fair hearer was with us: indeed, in all our excursions that beautiful boy was her companion. It seemed, indeed, that she lost enjoyment of the hour if he was from her sight. Her proud feeling, however, of having been selected by this highly gifted and beautiful woman as her intimate, and allowing her to treat him as a brother, was almost too great for any man to bear, and "keep the distance that he owed." As I kissed the bright laughing boy who played in my arms, I thought of him for his mother's sake.

The little varlet now screaming and laughing like a sprite, and clambering up my back, his playful mood, made the groves around us ring with his joyous laugh and shriek of pure delight. One moment he pelted us with sweet summer buds he plucked from the tree on which we were seated, and the next he slipped off and hid himself from sight in the cover of some clump of evergreens close at hand. For awhile, the doating mother watched him with her beaming eyes, echoed his laugh



own musical voice, and encouraged his  
ging mirth, rising every now and then to  
him into some bosky retreat; at length,  
ed with the sport, she bade him amuse  
elf whilst she rested, desiring the attendant  
maid to seek for and summon her carriage.  
nce," said she, playfully, to the beautiful  
"hence to kill cankers in the musk rose  
or 'war with rear mice for their leathern  
s.' Go kill me a red-hipped humble-bee  
ne top of a thistle."

ating herself, she leaned her check upon  
hand, as her eye wandered over the bright  
s of the lake, and watched the splendour  
ne setting sun, with the pine woods on  
margin, empurpled, shadowy, and massive-  
ng, as the glorious orb sank to rest.

O that I were a glove upon that hand,"  
ought, as I gazed upon her half-averted  
chiselled features, 'That I might touch  
cheek.'

know not whether I had given any part  
my thoughts tongue, or whether the Mar-  
ness guessed my admiration from my  
ce, but she suddenly turned her head,

and our eyes met. The expression of her face betrayed me as clearly as if I had written my thoughts in a volume; and her pure and eloquent language spoke in her cheeks. The embroidered glove which I so much admired, was in my hand: unconsciously I had retained it, whilst the sportive boy had fought me with it in his joyous merriment. She put out her hand for it, smiling with the innocence of her heart, only as such a radiant creature could smile. "Sweet ornament that decks a thing divine," said I, as I resigned it. In doing so, our hands met, and she pressed upon the snowy offering I carried it to my lips. I could hardly think on what I had done; I feared the Marchioness would be offended at my boldness; look on her again I dared not.

The next moment, uttering a piercing cry, with eyes like a maniac's starting from their sockets, she leaped up from the bank she had been seated upon, and stood on tiptoe, a personification of some nymph suddenly startled and distracted.

Hark! was that the dipping of the tail of a duck in the bright waters of the lake, or was it the splash of the otter beneath the rock.

sort of wailing cry disturbed the silence of the grove as I gazed upon the lady in awe, astonishment, and fear. The truth flashed upon my mind in an instant. It was her beautiful, her own. Little Lord Eskdale, had fallen into the lake. With the speed of thought I leapt to my feet, cleared the intervening space between where I had been seated, and bounding from the promontory, stood upon the isolated fragment of rock which rose from the sedgy lake, and looked around.

The situation commanded the base of the rocks for some distance, and beyond a jutting promontory near at hand, I beheld a dissolving circle scarcely defined, in the water, some fifty yards from the spot on which I stood. Marking well the spot, I once more adventured the hunter's leap, and untrammelled by his dogs, regained the promontory. The Marchioness was nowhere to be seen. I thought not of her, but dashing through the bushes in my descent, like one possessed with a demon, I made for the margin of the lake, and plunged headlong in; had it been a sea of flaming brimstone, I should have done the same.

So well had I marked the spot, that child's hat was the first thing I beheld float before me, as I rose to the surface, and instantly diving, I saw, seized, and brought him up. To gain the bank with my prize, was then the work of a few minutes, and to my surprise I saw that the boy was still alive. His clothes had spread wide, and mermaid-like awhile bore him up. He had but just sunk, when I dived, and reclaimed him. My delight at having saved the beautiful son of the Marchioness, the next moment gave place to alarm. Where was the Marchioness herself? I observed her dart down the vista she had just seen her child playing in before; she had forgotten him in contemplation of the glorious sun. The path she had taken led to a part of the rock, which beetled over the lake.

Surmising the dreadful truth, I shouted for assistance, and resigning the young Lord to the nursery-maid, who at that moment happened to the spot, I threw off my coat, and once more took to the stream. It was, however, in vain that I dived and swam around the spot, till some Newfoundland dog in search of a stone

the depths of the lake retained their prey; and oh, vulgar death for one so lovely! the Marchioness, like Ophelia, was drowned.

It was the morning after this untoward event, that I was seated in the private sitting-room of my sometime beautiful friend, at the Dragon, at Harrowgate. The Marquis was with me. He had been summoned from Doncaster by express. His little boy was in his arms; and to his repeated demand for his dear mamma, the Marquis had but one answer—his flowing tears. It was the first ten minutes of our meeting since his arrival, and the catastrophe. He had sent to me on the instant of his coming; and, like a culprit who had done a murder, I attended his summons. Four reeking posters stood at the inn-door, with his travelling-carriage, their distended nostrils and steaming flanks, telling the rate at which he had travelled.

"This has been a dreadful business, Sir," said he, as he arose and paced the room; "a dreadful and melancholy termination to our visit here. Nor can I altogether understand it, although you have told the tale over to me six several times. Oh, unhappy chance,

that took me to that cursed race ! You my boy, and I thank you. But oh, Sir, have I deserved that this affliction should so heavily upon men ? How could these occur ?”

The Marquis here became so much moved that he sank in the chair beside him, and I and took the child from his arms. For a while, he subdued his emotion, and addressing me, in an irritable tone. “ He said he, “ is it possible that such an accident could have occurred, when you say three persons were with the child. Where was the man at that moment ?”

I told him : “ Sent to summon the carriage.”

“ The rest of this cursed pic-nic party continued, “ were away, you say ; had left the gardens. Humph !—strange, to say the least of it ; and the Marchioness and yourself—were sitting at the sun setting upon the lake ; and the child was—I need not ask—in *the lake* !” “ Summon that nurse,” said he, rising, and ringing the bell violently.

The menial appeared, like Niobe, all in tears. At sight of her master, she managed to

roar, like a wild Indian—the usual practice with persons of this sort.

“Silence ! woman,” said the Marquis sternly. “I know the value of your grief of old, well as I know the value of your services. You are now no longer worth shedding—you are no longer servant of mine. I sent for you for your version of this affair, not to hear screams.”

“My Lord,” said I, “this is unkindly said. I uttered the plain unvarnished truth in this case; and, could my life have repaired it, I would have tried to save—”

“Grief, like impatience, Sir,” said the Marquis, interrupting me, “hath its privilege. I have made you, mistress,” he continued, turning to the nurse, “leave your charge, whilst this man entertained my wife?”

“My Lady’s order, Sir, to seek the carriage,” said the sobbing nurse. “Oh, lor ! oh, lor ! I am, Sir, if you will, but don’t say another word to me. Don’t blame me for it, or I shall lie raving mad. Oh, dear !”

“Your mistress had the child with her, then ? Did she leave it in her charge ?”



"Yes, Sir," said the servant. "She Lord Eskdale go and catch mice and hives amongst the thistles ; those were her words. Oh, my God ! I shall never find them, if I live to be a thousand years old. I returned from the gate, alarmed by this gentleman's cries, I ran to the spot, and found all three in the water together. What happened after that, God only knows, for I swooned clean away. When the men-servants hastened to my assistance, they dragged this gentleman out of the lake, almost drowned."

"Enough, enough !" said the Marquis ; "no more. Fresh horses, for Plumpton. I am going to Ham," said he to his attendant ; "remain here, settle all accounts here, and follow me to-day to Ferrybridge. Farewell, Mr. Blount," said he, turning to me. "Once more, I thank you for your exertions in favour of this poor creature. Pardon me, however, for expressing the wish that we had never met, and the still stronger hope that we may never meet again. That my conduct may not appear tinged with eccentricity in saying this, I can but in justice to you put these letters in your hand. Being at



ould not have noticed them, but for  
rophe, which to say truth gives some  
ur to their contents. I have, however,  
re to blame than any other person.

ng, the Marquis left the room with  
and proceeding to Plumpton, spent  
superintending the process of drag-  
lake for the body of his wife. His  
however, were not destined to be  
with success; and broken-hearted and  
ce, he returned to his estate in the  
om whence he never again emerged,  
artake of the pleasures of a season at  
te, or to enter into any other diversion

onymous letters he had received, were  
t myself as entertaining dishonourable  
upon the Marchioness; and desiring  
e valued his honour, to return at once  
caster. They were signed merely with  
d name of BACON.

gentle reader, were the results of my  
to the celebrated Dragon at Harrow-  
not say altogether, however, the result;

since I have to record other matters appearing, which in their relation will show the degrees that helped the consummation of my fall in life.

It may easily be surmised that the little episode I have just narrated would give me no taste for the amusements of this watering-place. It did so ; and, indeed, threw a gloom over the assembled company at the Dragon to some degree, that three parts of them shortened their visit, packed up their travelling apparatus, and departed. I should have left the place myself, had it been in my power to do so ; but it will be remembered that I was detached on duty, and consequently had no choice. However, as I could not cut the place, I determined to remove my billet, and accordingly betook me to the inn at Lower Harrowgate, mostly frequented and resorted to by invalids who came for the benefit of the waters.

At the Crown, therefore, I located myself, and well did the Crown at Low Harrowgate that period deserve the name of the House of Ill-fate, since the first day I sat down to dinner at the long table, I had a perfect surfeit of ill-fate.

visages. The waters of Low Harrowgate are famous for cutaneous and other affections of the skin; consequently, I beheld at table a community of personages so Bardolph-like in visage, that like that worthy corporal, each person's face seemed Lucifer's privy kitchen, and was covered with welks, and knobs, and tubercles, as Fluellin hath it. The hotel was slow, too, I found after the lively Dragon. No sporting colonel, full of jest and repartee, set the table in a roar. No sparkling Baronet lost his money upon one of a brace of maggots he found in his cracked filbert. No Lord Falconberg brought his hawks there from Falcon Hall, and invited the company to witness the sport upon the common beside the inn. No Sir Martin Bustard betted his thousand pounds upon the feat of clambering up the side of the inn, and entering the window of one of the chambermaid's rooms upon the roof, with no assistance in the ascent save what he obtained from a slippery clutch with his hands upon whatever coign of vantage could be grasped in the masonry of the stone building perilling his neck for the amusement of the company, performing a seeming act of impossible daring, and making up his losings at

the card-table for the week, by the fact, the life and gaiety of the Dragon of day unfitted me for the water-drinking somewhat serious visitors of the Crown ; albeit I was myself rather sad and dispirited by the late events, and mourned the sad death of my lovely friend, with a sincerity, which at a time unfitted me for the amusements of a watering-place, yet still I found myself sensibly led back to the Dragon and my friends there, in a sort of morning visit each successive day I remained.

High play, I have said, was constantly carried on at the Dragon, and, during my morning visits in this melancholy mood I frequently spent whole days in watching the whist-play. Captain Catchflat, during our brief intercourse, had somewhat inoculated me with a love of gambling, which however, but for the accident of Plumpton, and its consequently rendering me unfitted for a time for out-door amusements, might never have ripened to maturity. Now, however, after watching the game, I insensibly found myself compelled to cut in ; and the vice once indulged in, again became a passion. More and more, therefore, each morning, found me trea-

se delightful fields which lead from Low  
arrowgate to the pleasant garden-entrance in  
r of the Dragon, and night after night found  
absorbed in the card-room, playing for stakes  
t would have been ruinous to a peer of the  
lm, if long unsuccessful.

My career among the gamblers at Harrowgate  
s short. The constant ill luck which had so  
owed and made calamity of my life pursued  
at the tables, with great malignancy; play  
what I would, good cards fled my hands, and  
nk-notes my pockets. If, in cutting for  
tners, I gained Lady Merrimoth, the bank-  
tes disappeared from her lap, and the accus-  
ned trumps and honours from her hand.—  
on the contrary, she was my opponent, the  
e was as sure to gladden her eyes, as the  
ners were to accumulate to their usual height  
her nose. What Cassio says of drink might  
most be applied to gambling, "O thou invi-  
ble spirit of play, if thou hast no name to be  
nown by, let us call thee—devil."

At first I did but seek the tables, because  
e sounds of mirth and revelry were uncon-  
enial to my state of mind. In fact, I had lost all  
y mirth, foregone all custom of exercise, and

sought a temporary oblivion from thought in endeavouring to interest myself by serving others engaged at high play. Every countenances of those I beheld absorbed in this all powerful fascination, instead of appalling, at first amused me; till gradually drawn into the whirlpool, I was sucked amongst the victims. My career, however, short, as I said, and I arose one morning, after a day and night of hard play, not only completely cleared out, but loser of a large sum over and above what I could pay.

"Count Savinski," I said, to the Pole I had been playing with, "I find myself now drawn to the tune of ——".

"Yetz, Sare," said the Pole, "precisely. But it not mattare. Play on, pay to-morrow. Come, let's have fretch cards. Sit down, Monsieur, your turn now. Suppose you play a leetle dis next bout,—your game is to clear now. *Ecarté, s'il vous plaît.*"

"Not so, Count," said I, "'tis of no avail. I have tried that game too long. There is no I. O. U. for the sum. I have it not about me, but must write for it."

So saying, I arose and drew up the blind



By Gor, it is to-morrow," said the Count. "You no play more, I go to bed, that's all."

As there was no other flat to take a hand with Pole, he retired to his apartment ; whilst seizing pen, ink, and paper, commenced a letter to my father, for a remittance to save my honour.

Before I had written three lines, however, deep sleep stayed my pen. "No," said I, as I arose and walked the apartment, "I will not neglect myself to a refusal.—I will not confess to frailty. Since I have thus made an ass of myself, at least I know how to suffer for my honour. There is, however, no occasion to make a great sensation in this hotel, by disturbing the undisturbed sleep" with the report of the pistol I make my quietus with—I can manage otherwise. I must bid adieu to the hussars. My dear and much esteemed comrades I must bid adieu from, and cut the cavalry, for the flat is empty."

So saying, I resumed my pen, and addressing a letter to an army agent in town, requested him to procure me an exchange instantly, into a regiment in one of the most unhealthy of the West India Islands, naming the difference

I required, and which would repay Savins' infernal winnings in one last *sederunt*.

Exchanges at that time of day were effected. The army agent had but to over a few pages of his book. Select man suitable, write a letter or two, and thing was done.



## CHAPTER XI.

Ere the bat hath flown,  
Moistered flight; ere, to black Hecate's summons,  
Shard-borne beetle, with his drowsy hums,  
The rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done  
A deed of dreadful note.

SHAKSPERE.

WHILST this business was transacting, as it  
necessarily was known to my Colonel, I received  
several letters of remonstrance at my intent to  
leave him; and also others equally gratifying  
from all my brother officers. Nay, Colonel  
Blount, mounting his charger, galloped over  
from York to try and shake my purpose, and I  
detained him, to my surprise, dismounting at the  
door, as I was dressing for the table d'hôte.  
"My dear Blount, what is all this," said the  
old soldier, grasping my hand. "What  
the devil's name induces you to leave us?—

You, the favourite of the regiment, the life of the corps, the life of the heavens you've been the life of the corps you joined. We cannot lose you. Is it you dislike us, or does some matter of a private nature thus induce you to commit suicide going to St. Kitts?"

"I'll be candid with you, Colonel," said the boy, "there's no choice left me. Heaven knows how I love the —th, and all my brave officers. In losing yourself, Colonel, I lose myself. I love, I almost fear, as well as I do my father; for from you I have experienced the most generous and affectionate friendship since the hour I knew you. To say truth, I could never to have joined the hussars, as I could not afford it. This, therefore, has but anticipated our parting. In few, I have lost money which I cannot pay, without assistance from my father. Not being on terms with my family, I have taken the only means in my power to extricate myself from the difficulty."

"Not the only means, my dear boy," said the Colonel, "for had you written this to me I dare say I could have assisted you. Give me the sum, and if I can do so, I'll be glad to have it by to-morrow morning."

"Not for worlds, Colonel," said I, "since I never repay it again, I fear, unless I dis-  
of my commission. Heaven bless you  
our offer! but cease to urge it."

"Perish the paltry sum!" cried the generous  
soldier, "you never shall offer to repay it,  
as you mean to insult me."

"With tears in my eyes, I wrung his hand.

"Nay, then," said he, "if it be so, we must  
with you. But you are wrong, young man,  
being thus headstrong. Had I time I would  
go to your father myself upon the subject, and  
have you under arrest till I got his answer. But  
to-morrow's post you say will bring your  
letter with an advance from your agent."

"Tis even so, my dear Sir," said I, "and  
let us order dinner in a private apartment,  
as I had rather enjoy your company, tête-à-  
tête, than dine with you at the table d'hôte."

"We accordingly sat down, and took our bottle  
and claret together. After which, it being a  
very summer's evening, I ordered coffee early,  
and proposed a stroll.

"I must look at your detachment to-morrow,"  
said the Colonel, "and, as I suppose you will  
be glad to get away now, as soon as possible,

without waiting to see yourself gazetted. I must send for Devereux to relieve you.

We strolled through the village of Lowrowgate, and bent our steps towards the Common. There had been a horse-race that morning upon the heath, and the evening sports were just then at high tide. Accordingly, we were amongst the throng to observe the diversions going on. It was amusing to see the disciplinarian, the high-minded and chivalrous old soldier, who had served in the four quarters of the globe, as much diverted, and even carried away into the amusements of the bumpkins as the veriest clod-hopper amongst the rout.

"Look! look! for heaven's sake!" he cried. "look at those braw wenches streaming down the common almost in a state of nudity, with nothing on them, as I'm a sinner, but their smocks."

"E'es, Zur," said a bumpkin in the crowd, "that is a smock-race. Them wenches entered to run in their smocks, and her as wins a smock. You may see it there, y' see, be hanging at t' winning-post. Yoiks! off she goes! Dang my rags, but Moxy's safe to win. Huzza! I'll bet a pint o' beer."

a dollop of fat bacon, Mopsy wins the  
"

"They must be marvellously out of linen,  
e than Falstaff's regiment," said the Colo-  
"before they consent to go through such an  
al. Let's go, and see the winner. Well  
e, Cutty Sark," he said, "by Heaven, but  
ran well, Mopsy, and so did you, Betsy, and  
too, Maud, and Marian, Bridget, and Bess.  
a deserve a round dozen changes of linen.  
re's half-a-guinea amongst you. Egad,  
unt, but she's a well-built filly, that Mopsy,  
n upon her pasterns, strong jointed, and  
izing good action."

"E'es, Zur," said the bumpkin, "she's a  
ve wench, is Moll—a tightish craft. Don't 'e  
chucking she under the chin, Zur, she and I  
keep company, we do."

"There, stand aside, for I be going to climb  
this pole here for that leg of mutton o'top.  
noop, Robin. Now for first go."

Dire were the efforts of the Yorkists to  
arm up the pole, which being well greased,  
fast as one fellow attained nearly within arm's  
length of the mutton, the efforts at grasping it

caused him to slide down, and another upon his shoulders, struggled up to the same disappointment. Showers of sand and gravel, however, being at length thrown upon the pole by the competitors, one lucky wight succeeded at length in achieving the task, and a leg of mutton, which, like the head of a traitor, had graced the top of the pole, grinned defiance upon the mob, was in a few minutes torn to pieces and devoured.

Then came fellows to dip their heads in water for half-crowns, till they were drowned, and subsequently diving in barrels of flour, to grope for shillings, till they were choked. After that, we had the gratification of witnessing a race after pigs with soaped tails, called *cathee no havee*. Then came a jingling match, in which some nineteen fellows, (being blind-folks) were started to catch the twentieth, whose eyes were uncovered, with a sheep-bell tied between his legs. The rage and annoyance consequent upon the continual efforts of the blind to catch the fellow with the bell, which at last ended in a most amusing blind fight, greatly amused the Colonel; at last, after seeing a match

ing in sacks for a side of bacon, we wended way onwards.

A beautiful belt of pines bounds this com- to the eastward, and through them there are many pleasant walks. Towards these places we took our way. The evening breeze was delightful after a somewhat hot and sultry day, and proceeding up one of the shadowy lanes, we beheld in the distance a couple of men advancing at a swift pace towards us.

The hum of the village revel, just distinguish- sounded cheerily from the distant common, the occasional shouts of laughter, mingled with the drums and trumpets of the different bands, caused the Colonel frequently to stop and listen, as we sauntered onwards.

"Those mirthful sounds," said he "from yon- Scotchified heath, remind me forcibly of Sir Walter's inimitable description of the Wappens- in "Old Mortality." I thought so once or twice as I looked upon the scene; though I knew not what Lady Margaret Bellenden would have thought of those slightly-clad wenches running a race for such a garment as the one I saw displayed on yonder pole. 'Tis a pity



these country sports are fast fading away from our memories. The age, my dear, is getting too picked. We are refining away the good old customs of our forefathers. "Stay," said he, stopping short, "what companions have we here? Come forward," he called aloud to the two men I have mentioned, who, as he turned towards them, instantly stopped, and appeared inclined to follow their steps.

The Colonel was a soldier of the old school. In all military matters he was an iron rule, perhaps he erred in over-strictness. To those who were good soldiers, he was as gentle as zephyrs blowing beneath the violet. But to a malingerer, he was a terrible scourge.

The Colonel, looking like some Templar of old, six feet two in height, a perfect cavaliere figure, his bushy grey moustache covering his mouth like a portcullis, and his white hair cropped close, halted, as his eagle eye fell upon the two fellows the moment he turned round. He recognized them, and his shaggy eyebrows beetled, pent-house like, with an ominous frown.



"Come forward, Sirs," said he, in a stern voice. The men obeyed. As I looked at them, I saw that one was clad in dirty regimentals, but the other wore a smock frock, and carried a bundle at the end of a stout cudgel.

They moved quickly up, and endeavoured to

The soldier saluted, and the countryman would have done the same; but his comrade struck his arm down as he made the attempt.

"I thought so," said the Colonel, fixing his eyes upon the countryman, and putting out his hand and stopping the soldier. "Whither are you so fast, my lads?"

They were both most ill-looking and truculent fellows, dogged and resolute in bearing, and I seemed half inclined, I thought, to let them pass us.

"You're of the 105th, men," said the Colonel, "and stationed at Leeds. What does this fellow masquerading here in countryman's dress?"

"I'm on a few days' leave," said the soldier; "this man's not in the army at all."

"Tis false," said the Colonel, sharply;

"you 're deserters both: show me your pass, Sir."

The man looked like a demon; a flash of light flashed fire.

"My pass," he said; "yes, I can show you that."

"Do so," said the Colonel, holding out his hand to receive it, as the fellow, putting his hand into the breast of his coat, suddenly drew forth a pistol, and shot him through the heart.

"There's my pass," he said; "be off, you interfering soul."

Almost petrified with horror, I caught the Colonel as he staggered back; whilst the two deserters, leaping through the pines, escaped.

To give any correct idea of what I felt at this moment, is totally out of my power. Overwhelmed with the dead weight of the Colonel's body in my arms, and covered with his blood, I felt at the moment as if about to swoon myself, and it was some minutes before I was sufficiently collected to consider the best plan to pursue. In laying the body of the Colonel upon the grass, I found that he was

; and as soon as I ascertained that fact, I  
F in pursuit of the murderers.

ere is no necessity to pursue this part of the  
; I willingly pass it over. Suffice it, they  
taken, tried, and one of them executed.  
while, I had followed the old soldier, together  
my brother officers, to the grave; and  
a braver and more worthy soldier, the  
ing musquetry never sounded a re-  
l.

is event, and the trial of the murderer  
is comrade, necessarily detained me some  
at York; and whilst yet staying with my  
ades of the hussars, I received a letter  
the Adjutant-general, ordering me at the  
ation of my present leave, to join the dépôt  
e —th, at that time stationed at Fort  
ge, in Inverness-shire. I had therefore,  
lected, just time to run up to London,  
ail, order my equipments for the infantry,  
tart for the north.

, for a long time, I had heard nothing  
y father or his welfare, I resolved to  
the Grange in my way, (being now so near  
order to see how things were progressing

Some time ago, I had heard that my mother-in-law had favoured me with a little bride, and that the whole retinue had returned home. That, however, was now old news, and my indomitable pride would not allow my holding communication with my mother. Hitherto I had regularly received my allowance; and my time had been spent so fully with my comrades of the hussars, that the period of my unfortunate visit to home, that I had willingly endeavoured to forget, had all its disagreeables.

Could I have remained a short time in the hussars, I had every chance of a lieutenancy, as I had risen to the top of the list of cornets; but this unfortunate gambling transaction, shook all my buds from bloom, and in my exchange, I necessarily went down to the bottom of the list of ensigns. However, youth is the season of hope; and as long as I was master of myself, "lord of my passions, and no land beside," I felt that I ought not to despond, even though hitherto unfortunate.

I felt convinced of the truth of the words of Caius Cassius:

The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,  
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.

And every day, as I reflected upon my past  
er, I felt convinced that my own want of  
thought might have been the cause of the  
aps which had so inevitably followed,  
ged the heels, and made shipwreck of all  
doings. I set myself, therefore, down as  
ght, unweighing chap, without ballast, and  
m of purpose. I subjected myself to a  
of court of inquiry, and found myself  
icted of so many trifling misdemeanours,  
the whole amounted to a serious want of  
riety of conduct, and steadiness of deport-  
t. In fact I had dined at the mess of the  
n Hussars, for the last time; had been  
d, complimented, and regretted to the top  
ny bent; was tolerably overcome with grief,  
mpaign and excitement, and had got into a  
-chaise at three o'clock in the morning, so  
o steal away clandestinely, and avoid a repe-  
n of leave-taking with my noble-hearted  
rades in arms.

Thus was I once again cut adrift, and about  
seek my fortune anew. It was a sort of

retrograde movement I had made, as presumably awaited me in the hussars, where I was well beloved by the senior officers, and well esteemed by the juniors. I know not whether it be the same in all cavalry regiments, but in the —th we were a perfect band of brothers. There were none of those petty jealousies, of rivalry, bickerings, backbitings, calling names, and courts martial, such as I have since known. The regiment had been commanded by a man who in himself was like Prince Armand, "*toujours soldat*," the perfection of military honour, chivalrous feelings, and devotion to service. Stately and precise as the Knight of La Mancha, he had all his knightly qualities without a touch of his insanity. What I add to this, that the officers he commanded were, without exception, gentlemen by birth and fortune, it may easily be conceived, that in the exchange I was likely to make, I stood but a small chance of bettering myself, least of all in such exchange as I had just effected; and my service in the Sugar Islands of the West, during peacetime, is so generally disesteemed by the profession, that it is as a matter of course avoided if possible amongst the gentlemen.

blade. However, I was now going to the reserve companies of the —th foot, had a few pounds in my pocket with which to carry on the war, and hoped for the best. I trusted to redeem my past errors, and rise in the profession. Once more, then, I sought my home, in order to humble myself before my father, ask his blessing, and then put on towards Scotland.

"True, hope (said I) is swift, and flies with swallow's wings.

"Kings it makes gods, and meaner creatures kings."

As I repeated the lines of the aspiring Richmond, I fell asleep, till, "first turn, horses out," awoke me at the end of the stage.

## CHAPTER XII.

No ill luck stirring, but what lights o' my shou  
No sighs but o' my breathing, no tears but  
shedding.

Thou stick'st a dagger in me.—

SHAKSPE

THE day had broke some hours as I  
from the window of the chaise.

"What place is this, boy?" said I.

"Wetherly, Sir," returned the postilion.

"Don't bring out the horses yet,"

"I am undetermined whether or not I  
remain here all day. At any rate I shall  
here to breakfast." Accordingly I kicked  
the door, and entered the inn.

Mine host ushered me into a comfortable  
room, with a cheerful fire blazing on the  
It was a chill morning, and ordering brandy  
to be served immediately, I threw myself  
a chair, and lighted a cigar. I quite agree



Washington Irving in his commendations of the comfort and independance of an apartment in an inn; a man never, I think, enjoys a meal with greater zest than when, after the fatigue of a journey, he kicks off his boots, thrusts his feet into slippers, and seats himself before the fire of a snug little parlour of a road-side hostel. As I looked out of the window upon the well-kept little garden across the road, whilst I sipped a delicious cup of coffee and demolished the new laid eggs and buttered toast, served by the good-looking hostess, I thought that no man had a right to despond whilst he possessed the means of enjoying the comforts of which I then was partaking.

"Shall I bring in another muffin, Sir?" said the assisting damsel, in accents so gentle and conciliatory, that I felt half inclined to thank her for the offer with a kiss.

"Anything, my pretty lass," said I, "shall be welcome that is brought me by the handsomest girl in Yorkshire. At the same time I shall be more bounden to you, for the sight of an old newspaper to beguile the time."

Capriciously did she bend her head on one side, and dance up insidiously, as she returned

with a plate of reeking muffins in one and a newspaper in the other.

The girl was extremely handsome, cheeks like a rose, and the figure of a man. I felt I should be totally wanting in feeling not to offer her a salute. I even have given her two, but in giving at the paper she thrust almost at me she escaped, I saw that which, had she as she was, completely banished her from my thoughts. The paragraph which fixed my instant attention in the *York Herald* was sufficiently interesting; it was headed, in capital letters, thus:—"Conflagration, for the first time, of Wharnccliffe Grange, and total destruction of the building."

Like the poet Otway, who, it was affirmed, was a victim to an eleemosynary penny roll, stuck fast in his epiglottis, I was almost choked with the portion of buttered muffin I had been about to bite, my teeth the instant before I had read this startling intelligence.

Whilst I stood glaring upon the paper, reading the account of the catastrophe with incomprehending (in my eagerness to grasp all at once) one half that was given, amidst

entered the apartment with a countenance of wrath.

"I ax pardon, Zur, (he said) but you'll excuse I, if I tell'e I won't stand no nonsense to our Cis. She be a good and wartuous lass, Zur, and ain't used to be tumbled and touzled in yonder fashion. You'll excuse I, but you've made a mistake here; I'm jealous. This be the Harewood Arms, and if you've come into it thinking I keep a disrespectable house, you're considerably out, that's all. Cicely is my niece, Zur, and if so be as you're agoing to stay in this house, I'll thank'e to treat her as sitch."

"Landlord," I said, disregarding his anger, "have you a swift horse in your stable?"

"A what, Zur, a good horse? Did you ever know a Yorkshire farmer wi'out a good nag?"

"I see here an account of Wharncliffe Grange being burnt to the ground. Your paper gives few of the particulars of the catastrophe. Do you know any thing about it?"

"Ay, it be old news, that," said the landlord, "It have taken fire five or six times. First the rick-yard was burned; then the out-

houses ; next night, one wing of the house was discovered to be on fire, and when that was put out before day-break, t'other side broke out before night-fall. It is supposed to be the act of an incendiary. They've had constables there for the last week ; and yet, as t' paper there tells us, it's broke out again, and burnt to the ground."

"It is my father's residence, landlord," said I. "I see by this paper that no lives have been lost. Nevertheless, I should like to reach the spot as quickly as possible. As I know this part of the country well, if you will get me a fleet horse, I will cross the country, and reach the Grange in an hour. Forgive the kiss I gave to Cicely, landlord, and help me to a nag for the love of heaven."

"You shall have my own oss," said the host. "I be sorry now I scolded 'e. Here, hostler, bring out the little lass. My certie, but she'll carry you well. So you be young Master Blount," he continued, "be ye ? Lord save us ! but I'm sorry for yer misfortin. There's t' oss a coming round ; don't spur her, Zur. Fir's a dreadful infliction. Good bye, Zur. I wish you merry."

"There's for your bill, landlord," said I, as I

umped on his steed. "Send on my baggage to the coach to Abbots Wickford. The Grange is burnt down!" said I, as I buried my spurs in the horse's sides. "I am amazed, methinks, and grieved to see my way amidst the thorns and dangers of this world." Having, in former days, often crossed that part of the country after the fox, I made for my sometime home by the shortest cuts, and at full speed.

Clearing the deer-palings at Berrywell place, in a few minutes more I dashed through the belt of plantations, and presently drew bridle before the well-known, beloved old seat.

The account I had heard was but too correct. The mansion was a heap of smouldering ruins. A sort of falling scaffolding of blackened rafters, smoking galleries, and still burning staircases, hung from every part of the calcined walls of the time-honoured Grange.

The devouring element had done its worst, and the moat, now alas! but a rushy ditch, was in many places half filled with the rubbish of the fortress it had once washed with its protecting water. Some fire-men and labourers were

still keeping up a discharge of muddy upon the mass of burnt material, as I rose to inquire about the family, and their place of refuge. I found that they were long absent at the time of the conflagration ; and I saw no person I knew amongst the throng. I thought it best to seek old Martha, the housekeeper at her cottage without the walls.

I found her as I expected, with spectacles on her nose, and bible in her lap, seated before the door. She looked over her glasses as I passed up before her, but her eyes were too dim to recognize me at the moment.

"Any more ill news?" said she, snapping her fingers. "Methinks there is nothing now to add to the catalogue. The old mansion is in a heap of ruins ; the estate is sold, they tell me ; the man an outlaw, and the son an alien from his father's heart. What seek you, Sir," she continued, "one who has outlived all her hopes and fears. If you have aught to tell me of my child—my young master, it shall be welcome. If not, go on, and trouble me not."

"He comes to tell you of his own we

ertha," said I, dismounting. "Your old favourite stands before you."

The old dame threw her bible somewhat impatiently upon the turf before her, as she started and locked me in her arms. The next minute my horse was tied to the little gate, and I was seated in her humble cottage. The careful creature closed and bolted her door, before she would seat herself beside me, to answer the questions I poured upon her.

"Ah, it's a bad world, Sir," said she, as soon as she had informed me that my father was again abroad with his wife and some of her family, going at a château he had purchased, about twenty miles from Caen, "it's a bad world, Sir. There're queer stories about this fire. I suppose you know young Levison has been at the place the whole time during these repeated conflagrations. It's never been whispered, nor have I ever breathed such a thing; but if it has not been done by his hand, it must have been the work of the Evil One."

"I thought that constables had been on the watch, night after night, both within and without the building," said I.



"And so they have; himself having ordering of their stay there; and himself sitting up to watch, too; and himself the most at patrolling the grounds, taking all of precautions, and swearing that it must be done by some inmate of the house, or flames could never so mysteriously and continually burst out in so many of the locked apartments; ay, and himself the demon, while, that laid combustibles and set the fire. Nay, I wouldn't hesitate to swear that it was an incarnate devil who has done the mischief even before the whole world."

"'Twere best not, Margaret," said I. "There's no proof, it seems."

"No, so I find," returned the old woman. "More's the pity."

"And where is he now?"

"Started for France, to carry the clattering fiend! He's like the genius of mischief and rapine, an evil and malignant demon."

"What could be his motive, Martha?"

"Ill will to you, I'll be sworn. He has been I'm told, that you were greatly beloved and thought of in the regiment you were in, and wished to spite you in your tenderest part."



ew you loved the old mansion with a devoted affection."

Badly as I thought of my enemy, I could hardly conceive him so malignant as the faithful old servant made him out. It was useless to dwell upon the subject, and I willingly turned my inquiries upon a more interesting subject, the owners of Marston Hall. Although I had not up a correspondence with Mistress Sweet-ble occasionally since I had left my father's of, still I had much to learn, I found.

"Miss Villeroy," said I, "Martha, have you any news to give me of her or her relatives?"

"None that will much please you," she replied. "That party has been on the continent, almost ever since you left London. They have now returned to this neighbourhood; and report says, that your old antagonist, Lord Ardenbrass, is speedily to marry Miss Villeroy, they be not already married."

Notwithstanding all the efforts I had made to school myself, and try to forget that lovely creature, a pang, sharp as the stiletto of the Portuguese, shot through my heart at the words.

"The fiery trigon hath recovered completely from his wounds," said I, "has he? Well,

happiness be theirs ! And the Lady Constance, what of her ? Is she married, too, Martha ?

" No," returned the old dame, " I can assure you for it, she is not. Her whole care and attention has been given to her father, the Duke, who has never recovered the dreadful wound he received in London, in that duel with Lord Cœur de Lion. I understand he is in a miserable state of health, even now ; and is, however, very likely to be much better."

I felt shocked to hear this ; and reproached myself with the taunt I had thrown out at Lady de Clifford.

" Excellent creature !" said I ; " how much to the honour that paragon of women. For firmness of disposition, nobleness of mind, worth, honour, and beauty, Martha, that lady stands upon a monument, high as the clouds, above her fellow-creatures."

" She certainly is an excellent lady," returned Martha ; " with the brow of a queen, and the gentleness of a child. I saw her but a few days ago."

" Saw her ! Who, Martha ?"

" Lady Constance de Clifford. She has been here more than once since they returned."

"Here? Lady Constance here? what, in this stage?" said I, surprized.

"Yes," returned Martha; "and sitting in that chair you now sit on."

"For what did she come hither, Margaret," said I.

"Ostensibly to inquire after *me*—in soberness, to inquire about *you*. I was ill, and confined to my bed; Mistress Jampote, the housekeeper at Marston Hall, who knows me, heard of it, and told the Lady Constance. A few days afterwards I was visited on my sick couch by the doctor, from Abbots Wickford, and the next day the Lady Constance, in her riding-habit, was standing beside my couch when I awoke, after a refreshing sleep, the effects of the doctor's drugs."

"Beautiful creature!"

"Since that," continued Martha; "she rode over twice a-week, to inquire after me; and you may be pretty sure we spoke of you often. Nay, it's all very well, but you won't easily persuade me that a young and lovely creature like that would come twice a-week, so many miles, merely to inquire after an old bed-ridden house-

keeper, without there was some interesting she wished to learn from her."

"How long did you say it was since last was here?" I inquired.

"A month," said Martha. "She came after that unlucky accident she was of."

"What accident? in heaven's name."

"Why, the Marchioness of Richborough being drowned in the lake, at Plumpton."

"The devil!" said I. "How came you to hear the particulars of that affair, Margaret?"

"Naturally enough," she replied. "The Marquis is her relation; she couldn't but hear all about it; most likely from her own self."

"Martha," said I, rising, "I find the room rather warm. For the present, I must leave you, and take my horse to the stable where I intend to sleep. To-morrow I shall visit you again before I leave, as I have much to say to you. For the present, farewell."

"Farewell, my dear child," she said. "I am indeed! what a man you have become!"

one, if you're an inch. And how dark and curly your hair is grown; and how handsome you are! Well, I always said you were the picture of Sir Herbert, and now you are liker than ever. Ah, my dear young master, I fear your father is playing a hard-hearted game with you. I have every reason to believe he has actually disinherited my poor boy, now this danger has come into the world."

"I should not care, Martha," said I, "though he cut me off with a shilling, so he did not utterly cut me off from his affections."

"Alas! alas! 'evil communications corrupt good manners,' as the copy-book says; and now he is now led by and connected with, he will pervert his mind. I suppose you have heard that all the pictures, plate, and valuables have been packed up and sent off to stow away in this Château Rousillon he has taken?"

"I neither know or care, Martha," said I. "It is enough that my father thinks me unworthy to share his affections or his councils;—that, without fault on my part, he has almost turned me from his hearth, and degraded me

as far as he could in the eyes of the world. "I have faults, I acknowledge—that I am headstrong, rash, fiery in temper, and inconsiderate with a thousand faults besides, I am ready to acknowledge; but that I am, as he would have the world believe, vicious, evil in disposition, profligate, and altogether a fool, that I deny. Farewell, Martha," said I. "'Evil or good report as the poet says, 'we soon live down, if undeserved.' Unfortunately my career as yet has been so singularly unlucky, that I have not been able to give the lie to my maligners and various enemies; and those I have fallen in with in the world, have but too frequently shewn themselves in disgusting colours. The seed of good offices which I have sown, has perpetually produced the harvest of ingratitude. It was truly unfortunate, indeed, I could not remain in, the—for there I found myself in a situation which might have led on to fortune. Well, be it so, good Martha, adieu, for the present. To-morrow, I shall visit and take leave of you before I start."

It was not my intent to ride straight to the village, although I told old Martha so, in order

I might spend some time in wandering about the neighbourhood I loved so well. I before bent my steps to the now devastated village; and dismounting, gave my horse to a labourer. I found amongst the labourers and firemen, with directions to take him to the village, to order me supper and a bed at the little inn. "For the last time, perhaps, in my life I will spend a few hours," thought I, "amongst the scenes of my youth. And if, as Martha says, I am disinherited by my sire, I will never again return hither."

Thinning the bustle and hubbub going on about the smouldering building, I struck into a narrow chace, and bent my steps towards the old churchyard of Belfield, a favourite spot, with lovely glimpses of forest scenery, its roman-castle, and its old walls, grey with the wind and rain of centuries. "In such a spot," says the one or other, "Death is never unlovely, he meets us with the Gospel upon his lips, and the garland of hope upon his forehead." I wandered amongst the moss-clad tombstones, and the shadows of evening warned me to depart. The mournful yew-branches were silvered



in the moonlight as I arose to leave the yard. It is difficult, at such moments, such a scene, to tear oneself away. They linger beside the old grey tower, which to stand a monument of the Crusading of former days. "Can it be possible thought," that Old Martha has heard. Can it, indeed, be true, that my father to sell the estate upon which his sire dwelt since the Conquest?" The thought agonizing: and I turned, and slowly to way towards the Grange. I wandered amongst its gardens and shrubberies for hours. The state in which I found showed how much the place had of late neglected. The unpruned trees and encroached completely upon the once wide gravel walks, and the long dank grass, luxuriance in every part of the pleasure. I visited the stream at the end of the with its overhanging trees, where in boyhood had first learned to angle, and listened to the bird shrieking in the woods beyond. Then, going towards the building, I contemplated its ruined walls, a volume of smoke rising from midst, and the moon showing the ghastly



etern-like rafters, through the ample windows  
falling towers.

Whilst I gazed upon the rent and umbered  
dings, as though they had but awaited my  
ing that I might witness their downfall,  
e of the timbers gave way with a horrid  
h, the walls seemed to slide inwards into  
midst, coming down with a noise like  
growl of distant thunder, a huge volume  
smoke arose into the clear night-air. That  
the last time I ever saw the Moated  
nge.

## CHAPTER XIII.

I should have wearied of this fellow's company, had not been still more tired of my own thoughts.

His breath is as dangerous as the breath of a demiculverin.

SCOTT.

A DAY or two from this period, found me in the great metropolis, lounging in the great street of that town of towns, and making my way to the great artist in military habiliment Mr. Jones, of Regent Street, in order to consult with him upon the necessary equipment for my new regiment, the 145th. Upon introducing myself, and making my wants known, he quickly took upon himself the ordering of my habiliments.

"There is a gentleman at the other end of the shop, Sir," said he, "belonging to the

th, Lieutenant Bullyman, just at this moment trying on a regimental coat."

On turning, I instantly recognized the youth who had been my fellow-passenger to Cork, who had professed himself an advocate for the custom of fighting a duel upon first joining corps, as a necessary *début*. I therefore had no scruple of stepping up and accosting him, as I wished to learn something of the regiment, and the part of the world I was bound for. He remembered me instantly, and enlightened me upon the subject, as far as was possible.

"Fort George," said he. "Oh, it's a d——d bad place. Every day there, Sir, is a death. Added to which, there are so many detachments still-hunting, that it's a case of military confinement altogether. There are no temporary barracks up in the mountains; and one never sees the *depôt* for months at a time. For my part, I shall try and get into the service companies; for it's the worst to be snowed up in a Highland castle for months at a time, where you can hardly get food to eat, and are as miserable, as if an exile in Siberia."

I felt pleased at the thought of so a situation, and determined to volunteer of those Siberian detachments the moment I got there. As Lieutenant Bullyman, who had been on leave for two months, was likely to be on the eve of starting for Fort George, I agreed to go together, and commenced our intimacy forthwith. We dined, there together that day; went to Covent Garden that night, and the next night, after our regimentals to be forwarded without delay, started, per mail, for the north.

Scotland had always been fairy-land to me. The perusal of Guy Mannering would have made me anxious to visit it; the scenes described in Rob Roy had rendered the Highlands so peculiarly interesting, that I was upon each pine forest, rocky glen, river, and heath, with the devotion of a Highlander. I was going there, too, under tolerably favourable circumstances; not as an idle tourist, but as a soldier on duty. Loch Katrine and Loch Lomond, and the mountains, hunting after the whisky bottle,

se hardy Highlanders—as Francis Osbaldiston  
at the clachan of Aberfoil.

“Pah!” said my companion, “what a mis-  
e! You’ll find the highlands a bore, Fort  
George, a Bastille, the country altogether over-  
d, and the inhabitants a race of Esquimaux.  
y, Sir, if you ask a lady to dance at a ball.  
ll answer you in an unknown tongue. ‘Fats  
wull,’ was all I could get out of the mouth of  
last lady with whom I danced at Inverness—  
day after we marched to Fort George.  
ere was Buttenshaw, Pattypan, L’Estrange,  
O’Grady, all five of us got the same answer  
our partners that night. ‘Fats yer wull,  
dinna ken,’ was all we could elicit. For a  
e,” continued my companion.—‘Which,  
dam,’ said I, by way of commencing an  
resting conversation; ‘which do you think  
s best on parade, the bear skin or the  
co?’

‘Fats yer wull,’ said the lady.

‘I beg pardon,’ said I; ‘but will you favour  
by translating that pretty *patois*. I don’t  
erstand ‘Fats yer wool?’ Is it Gaelic or  
a-Dutch?’

‘I dinna ken,’ returned the damsel.

"And there the conversation dropped minutes. However, as the lass was remarkably handsome, I determined to draw out, if possible.

" 'Pray, Madam,' said I, 'what is your private opinion on the subject of wings and epaulettes? The wings, as you see, are ornamentals upon the shoulders of the bobs and grannies. The epaulettes are decorations pertaining to the battalion. The gentleman next you wears a wing and an extremely handsome swab upon my shoulder an epaulette; which do you consider to be the becoming of the two?'

" 'Fats yer wull,' returned the lass, with the prettiest expression in the world.

" 'Which, I'm asking, Madam, do you together prefer?'

" 'I dinna ken,' she said, with a glance at her friend opposite, and the conversation dropped. There, Sir, think for an intellectual treat."

"I have always heard," I said, "that the better classes in Scotland are no whit inferior to their English neighbours in conversational powers. De Mowbray of the hussars,

Highlander, has given me several letters of introduction to the different families around; if I'm to be saluted with tones so unsocial to English ears, as 'Fats yer wull,' and 'anna ken,' I think I shall put them in the pocket. Where was this assembly held at which you met those fair nymphs with the discordant voices?"

"It was not at an assembly, man, at all," returned Bullyman, "it was at a Highland meeting."

"A Highland meeting! Oh! that accounts for it. What, a sort of gathering, when only the peasantry meet together."

"It's all we have seen of Scotch society as yet, however," returned Bullyman; "for, unfortunately, not one of our officers have any acquaintance in the North."

"Well, I shall look up my introductions," said he, "and deliver them faithfully. My friend, Mr. Swbray, speaks rapturously of the style of the assemblies amongst the gentry in the North, and the pleasures, he says, are delightful."

"Well, well," said Bullyman, "we shall see what your introductions do for us."

In this sort of conversation we passed the borders, wound our way amongst the mountains lone," and reached Edinburgh; we halted for a night's rest, and crossed the Frith of Forth the next morning.

It was four o'clock, pitch dark, gloomy and dismal, as we crossed the Forth; so we saw little of Sir Walter's "own town."

"There," said Bullyman, when we were in the kingdom of Fife; and as we looked at this fine, barren-looking, inhospitable spot, he dared swear now, you would be for looking at Macduff's castle, where his wife, his babes, and all the innocent souls that traced his name, were put to the sword."

"I would we had time enough," said I, "I certainly should do so. This is Fife, is it? How many romantic and delightful associations does it call to mind."

"You'd much better call to mind your baggage in the boat; for I see at least a dozen of those brawny Scotch porters have taken hold of some one or two of the packages. I saw one fellow, with the brawn of Hercules, loaded himself with a hat-box of mine,



a six-and-ninepenny gossamer, and is making much of getting it ashore, as if it were a man's chest."

We now traversed over the kingdom of , and crossing the Firth of Tay, reached Aberdeen that night. From thence we took a night-coach, and arriving next morning at a little hamlet of Campbeltown, bent our steps across the heath to Fort George.

Fort George is a dark, sombre-looking place. On one side the wild waters dash, and on the other a blasted heath, barren enough to be identified with the very place where Macbeth encountered the witches, meets the eye. As my companion had described it, a more dull and melancholy looking place for a regiment to be quartered in was not, I should think, to be met with in Great Britain.

It was a perfect town withinside the walls; but it seemed an uninhabited town, for not a house was to be seen, except the sentinels' huts in the gates.

Just as we entered, however, the bugle sounded the assembly, and the dépôt of the 6th were beginning to turn out for parade. We stopped, therefore, in the dull, dark-looking

square to observe them. Altogether the appearance of the place reminded me of the description in "Ivanhoe," of the Preceptory of Templestow. The morning was cold and comfortless, a driving sleet blew in our faces, and the buildings had a melancholy and half habitable look; whilst ever and anon the armed heel of some field officer, or *depôt* adjutant, clanked upon the pavement, as he passed from one door to another of the officers' quarters. Presently the brass drum, rattling and reverberating, was re-echoed from the walls around, whilst the trumpets, fifes, cymbals, and bagpipes flourished out their inspiring notes. The companies wheeled into column, and the *depôt* marched past in review order.

These are sounds which sanctify the most unpleasing quarters. Accordingly all the military ardour and enthusiasm which he who loves the trade of war, is wont to feel when viewing its "pride and circumstance," filled my breast, and I felt that life passed, under any other circumstances, must be flat, stale, and valueless.

My companion now offered his services as guide, and ushering me into the mess-room, introduced me to several officers who were there

assembled. It happened that at this time there was a pretty large muster of officers, from various other regiments and depôts quartered in Scotland, on occasion of a general court martial having the day before assembled, and as there were also the depôts of two other regiments at that time in the fort, there was a good sized party in the room.

After the parade was over I was also formally introduced to my brother officers of the 45th, and reported myself arrived safe and sound to the then commanding officer of the depôt, Major Clavering. I was received by them with great kindness, and the circumstance of my having exchanged from the hussars, was rather a favourable feature in my case; the officers serving in a regiment stationed in the West Indies, being generally men whose poverty, more than will, consents to such unhealthy service.

I thought, however, I observed a sort of coldness towards my friend Bullyman, which I could not completely comprehend, and which I set down to his style being rather toorodomontade and overbearing. He was evidently a boaster and a disputacious personage,

loud and dictatorial in conversation, very much inclined to dispute upon every topic which arose in conversation, and sometimes so rude and abrupt in manner as to make a disagreeable stop in the harmony of the assembled party.

He rather hung to my skirts I observed, and wished to have it supposed, by his manner, that we had been friends of old. Making himself, therefore, as agreeable as his nature permitted, he introduced me into my barrack-room, and performed for me all those little attentions most grateful to a stranger and a newcomer.

There was to be a party at the mess that day, I found. Several civilians had been invited, residents in the good town of Inverness, and as he offered me the use of his room and his servant, whilst my quarters were getting in order, we were soon cozily seated beside his fire, I smoking a friendly cigar and holding converse as we looked from his window, upon the wild waters dashing upon the iron-bound Scottish coast.

"A pleasant view that," he observed, seeing my eyes wander over the main of waters.

"Delightful," said I.

"How d'ye mean by that," said he, "*delightful*, I think it *damnable*, disgusting and disagreeable. Fancy being lodged in this sea-built tower, and condemned to watch the monotonous waters of this infernal coast for a whole year together; and that to a man of my kidney. One who *has seen* society, and mingled with the world, lived in the eye of fashion from infancy. Oh, it's monstrous! London, Sir, is my world; I am wretched in this situation. Think of this dreary inhospitable view, and the bustle and gaiety of Regent Street at this hour of the day."

"I rather prefer this," said I, "of the two. Perhaps I shall tire of it; but at present the view of the ocean from your window, now that the sun gilds the waves, 'those curly headed monsters,' is delightful. What made you join the army? for I fear you'll find it, with your ideas and tastes, rather a succession of banishments."

"I fancy I shall, from what I have already seen," said he. "I came to the place from Spike Island in Ireland."

"What place is that?" I inquired, laughing.

"Spare me the description," said he bitterly,

"I cannot liken it, I never saw the like. 'Tis the curse of service, Sir. We are sent to waste life in places, which (but for this red rag we're decked out in, and this trinket we wear by our sides, and which somehow reconcile the children of vanity to all the hardships the trade is heir to) it would break the spirit of a hermit to be obliged to exist in."

"My dear Sir," said I, "you have mistaken your profession. Why do you follow the trade of arms, or why have you not rather chosen some profession in which you might have passed your time amidst the bustle of life in London?"

"What! be an inspector of filth, a doctor, or wear out my youth chained to the desk of a merchant's counting-house; or defeat my favour with a wig and gown, and become some Temple-haunting briefless barrister; some *nisi prius* scarecrow? No! that would never do for my complaint."

"Well, what then would you like?" said I.

"Ten thousand a year and a park. That's what I like. Curse the service; I detest and abominate it."

"Then why not sell out, and retire to your

ark, and the ease and enjoyment of the ten thousand superfluities, and luxuries purchasable by your ten thousand a-year?"

"My dear Sir," he returned with a sigh, "I'm a younger son. I haven't ten thousand a-year, besides my pay; or think ye I'd be here?"

"Then," said I, "it strikes me, since you seem to have no choice in the matter, having made your election, and joined the service, the best way would be to make yourself as happy as you can."

"I suppose so," said the Lieutenant drily. "However, I confess to you, that I might have been more content if I had joined any other corps but this. I don't like the gallant 145th, they're a queer set of fellows."

"They appear to me a very gentlemanly set of fellows," I replied.

"No doubt, on a two hours' acquaintance, you think so," he rejoined. "So did I till I found them out. For instance, there's Roland Robert Fetlock; that is a colt, indeed, but he can talk of nothing but his horse. He's one of the bores of the mess-table, and he goes by the name of the groom. I gave him

that name, and if he had not been a coward, as well as a base groom, he'd have called me out for it. You'll be bored to death with the merits of that Squire Richard's stud, if you give him your company, I promise you. Fancy a man of eight thousand a-year, and whose passion is horses, serving in a regiment in the West Indies,—*ergo*, he's fool, as well as jockey.

“Then there's Captain Euclid, a narrow-minded pedant, very fit to display his deep reading, and wrangle away his life at Oxford or Cambridge, amongst other black-letter double asses, as disputative as himself, but no more calculated for the society of army men, than I am for those of the cloister. He'll interrupt Fetlock's description of how his horse performed in a hurdle race, to lecture upon the superior style in which Bucephalus carried Alexander, or to assert the superiority of the Spartan horsemanship over that of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem.

“Then comes that water-fly, Bellarmine; the most insensate ass that ever was enfolded in regimentals: a selfish, miserable, empty coxcomb; a regular libel upon manhood.”

“My dear Sir,” said I, “I must not sit to



hear this ; come, it is time that we prepared  
for the mess."

"Nay, hear me dilate upon the virtues of  
our commandant," he said ; "let me put you  
in possession of his capabilities as a soldier,  
and I will spare you the remainder."

"Not a sentence," I said ; "I should hold myself  
in some sort of receiver of scandal, if I heard more."

"Well, *n'importe*," said he, "you'll find  
that I have uttered is the truth, at any  
rate."

Soon after this conversation, the drums  
beating out the "roast beef of old England," we  
went to the mess-table, where altogether a large  
party were assembled. Here again I thought  
I observed, that amongst the officers of his own  
regiment, my friend Lieutenant Bullyman seemed  
to be by no means a favourite. He was not  
exactly cut, but there was a reserve on their  
part towards him and a sort of endurance of  
his conversation, when addressed to any of the  
regiment, which shewed me he had in some way  
made himself on ill terms with the whole dépôt.  
Accordingly, he retaliated upon them by a con-  
temptuous and rather rude bearing, which ever  
and anon met with a sharp rebuff ; and the

personalities he indulged in, were met by those to whom he addressed them by reproofs, which for the time generally discomfited him, and sent him to another party. Meanwhile, the dinner being over, and the mirth growing fast and furious, bumper after bumper was swallowed, and the table was quickly in a roar.

"Squire Richard," cried Lieutenant Bullyman, "you're going the pace, I see; come, I'll take you a bet you don't gallop up a hill perpendicular, and with a pistol, shoot a sparrow flying."

"I never boasted of my skill in the pistol," said Fetlock, "though I cannot say as much for others. You're a good shot, I think you told us so; can you hit Wat Tyler's mark?"

"Not he," said Bellarmine, "he doesn't relish a target that fires again. Best not spur the horse too sharply, Bullyman, he may fling up and send you into a ditch."

"Better be struck by the hoofs of the horse, than the heels of the ass," said Bullyman. "I didn't address myself to you."

"If you allude to the ass in the lion's skin, I grant you," returned the dandy.

"No more of that," said the commanding officer; "a song, a song, Captain Plume is

g to favour us with the 'British Gren-  
3.'"

It was easier to call for a song, than gain  
hearing, where every man talked, and few  
heard. Amongst the loudest of the speakers  
Captain Euclid, who had got upon his  
favourite theme, the ancients. Accordingly,  
his new friend soon proceeded to draw him out,  
he called it, and involve himself in fresh  
difficulties.

"I maintain an opinion opposite to that,"  
said, in answer to some observation he had  
heard him utter: "I hold fast to the Macedonian  
phalanx; a fig for your short-sworded soldiery  
of the seven-hilled city. I'm for long spears  
and solid squares, albeit, I've no objection to  
wedge formation either."

"You're clean wrong then, Sir," said the  
captain, taking the bait. "The Greeks and  
Macedonians were in error, with their sixteen  
ranks of long pikes, wedged in close array.  
The selection, as well as the event, prove that the  
massive phalanx, strong as it was, was unable  
to contend against the activity of the Roman  
legion. The legion was only eight deep."

"Ten, Sir, ten, I've been told," said Bullyman.

"Eight, only eight; every school-boy kens that," returned Euclid; "and three feet between files, and three feet between ranks; consequently they had free space for the use of their arms and motions. Yes, Sir, it was the short-sword, and this formation, that conquered the world."

"Ha, ha!" said Bullyman; "with the musket and bayonet in the hands of the 145th, I wouldn't care a pin for their formation and weapons, even though you led 'em on,—not a pin."

"A pin, said ye," returned the pedant, "peradventure, a pin may be a more important instrument than you imagine. A pin has a head, Sir, and that's more than some folks I know are possessed of; but as regards the phalanx—"

"No, no," shouted Bullyman, "the pin, the pin. Prove the importance of the pin, and I give up the phalanx to the devil who invented it."

"The pin," said the Captain, contemptuously, "my dear Sir, however, you may despise it, requires in its manufacture, the hands of at

at a dozen men ; quite, I should say, as intellectual, though, peradventure, not quite so conceited as your worthy self. 'Cornet my ar.' "

"I'm not going to dispute it," returned the lieutenant, winking at me, as much as to say, we shall have it. "Go on."

"The pin," continued the Captain, "in its manufacture, will instance the division of labour better than any article I can just now think of, and the fair Belinda at her toilette, perhaps, she repaired her smiles, little thought when she selected the bright particular pin which confined her boddica, the number of hands that the pin had necessarily passed through in its formation. Ahem ! Yes, Sir. One man draws the wire, another is employed to straighten it, a fourth points it, a fifth grinds it at the point for receiving the head. To make that head, requires, two or three distinct operations, to put it on is another man's business, to write the pin is another's, and it is even a trade of itself to put them into paper."

The Captain's description had so interested and amused the whole table, that it was with difficulty several near him could restrain them-

selves from bursting into laughter. However, he was so absorbed in his own conceit, that with his eyes raised, and his head thrown back he continued to dilate upon the subject, till he had completely given the history of the trade.

“Pin-making being thus divided into distinct operations, gentlemen,” continued he, “even a small manufactory, composed of but ten persons, can easily produce fifty thousand pins in a day, think of that; each person, therefore, Sir, can bring to perfection four thousand eight hundred pins daily. Think of that, gentlemen,—and remember also, if you please, that had they wrought independently, the best man among them could not have made twenty.—This most important young gentleman, here, although he evidently despises the instrument, could not even have manufactured one pin in a month, to save his soul.—ahem!”

“I thank my stars, therefore,” said Bullyman, “and I hold him base, common, and mechanical, who could so give up his time, as even to have learned by rote, the process of making a pin. Ha, ha! fancy, only fancy, gentleman, the circumstance of our learned and worthy friend, Captain Euclid; the erudite

and accomplished author of the Life of Quintus Metellus Celer, proconsul of the Gauls, condescending to inquire into the component parts of minnikin pin. Ha, ha, ha ! bravo."

"Laugh at yourself, Bullyman, my dear," said the Captain, growing angry. "I'll assure you, you'll find the subject inexhaustible, you're a puir weakly, shallow mortal, Cornet, with no more brains than are to be found in a ballet."

"Perhaps not, in the estimation of a narrow-minded pedant," returned Bullyman. "I don't allow you to be judge of a man's capacity, for anything but the manufacture of pins. Ha, ha ! God help thee, Euclid, for thou art a great fool."

The Highlander's answer to this, was in deed, not word. He leant across the table, and with his face glowing with rage, emptied his glass of claret into the countenance of Lieutenant Bullyman.

Except by those immediately near where we were seated, and who had been listening to the controversy and enjoying it, the party had not seen this transaction, and it effectually silenced all who had witnessed it.

The irate Scot, having thus vented his anger, arose from his seat, and deliberately taking his foraging cap from the peg on which he had hung it, walked out of the mess-room; whilst Lieutenant Bullyman was so taken by surprise at the consummation he had provoked, that he appeared completely dumbfounded. He hadn't even energy to wipe from his beard the libation Captain Euclid had conferred upon it; but sat with stupid dismay eyeing his opponent till he left the room.

Meanwhile, the transaction was presently whispered from one to other, till the whole table became cognisant of the matter: all eyes were then turned upon the discomfited Bullyman; and the mirth being marred, the somewhat uproarious laughter and conversation quickly subsided into silence.

"Had you not better retire?" said I, to Lieutenant Bullyman, who, was sitting leaning back in his chair, his chin upon his chest, and his eyes fixed upon the mahogany before him.

"Do you advise it?" inquired he.

"I hardly know how to advise in such a case," said I, "but I think you had better do so."



"Will you come with me," said he.

"I'll follow you in a few minutes," replied I, "if you wish me to be your friend."

"For God's sake, do so," said he, rising and retiring; "come quickly."

The senior officer of the 145th, Major Claverag, who had been engaged in conversation with the friend next him, had not seen, or been made acquainted with this little fracas. He, therefore, rallied the guests, pushed the bottle about, and the conversation once more becoming general, I arose, left the room, and sought Bullyman's quarters.

I found that gentleman in bed, to my no slight astonishment, and upon my inquiring as to the meaning of such an early retirement, he informed me that he had sent for the surgeon of the regiment, as he meant to put himself in the sick report.

"Report yourself sick!" said I, in astonishment, "and at such a time as this. Then, what do you mean to do about Captain Euclid?"

"What do you advise?" said he.

"You surely don't want advice," I replied.

"You cannot help yourself. You must call him out instantly. Did you not ask me to be your friend?"

"I've thought better of it," said he, turning and rolling himself in the coverlid; "I shall do no such thing. I shall report him to the commanding officer for ungentlemanly conduct at the mess-table."

"And this is your firm determination?" said I.

"It is," returned he.

"Then, I wish you good night, Lieutenant Bullyman, and pleasant dreams," returned I. "Here comes the Doctor."

Leaving my new friend, I sought my barrack-room, and tired with my journey, retired to bed.

It was evident to me now, why my friend the Lieutenant was on ill terms with his brother officers. He was evidently a bully and a coward; had got himself into several scrapes before this untoward event, and failing in doing the thing that was right, was slightly regarded accordingly. This last affair, however, was a more serious scrape than he had yet

rust himself into, and strange to say, he had not courage sufficient to meet the man whose insult he had provoked.

Meanwhile, the Colonel was made acquainted with the circumstance, by the person who ought to have been most careful in concealing it, himself. The Captain, therefore, finding that my new friend failed in calling him out, (being impatient of action) proceeded to call the lieutenant out for the insult he had given him, before he himself baptized him with the sword. The Lieutenant refusing to come when called upon, the whole affair became a matter of inquiry, and created quite a sensation in the corps.

Major Clavering, our commandant, was a gallant and chivalrous soldier, and one who had sought the bubble reputation, more than once "in the imminent deadly breach;" a sort of fellow who would volunteer for a storming party as readily and carelessly as he would for a steeple-chase; but he was quite unequal to the command, even of the *dépôt* of a regiment. He couldn't move an inch without an adjutant. His ambition was to have a

fashionable regiment, and he especially liked those quarters in time of peace, where he could patronize the ball, the play, and the mess dinner-party. He was, indeed, a gay and gallant fellow, as jealous of the smallest deviation in dress among his officers on parade or in the assembly room, as he would have been of their address in the field. The circumstance, therefore, of one of his corps being known to have provoked and received an insult without resenting it, was gall and wormwood to him. Being of a kind disposition, he wished to avoid courts martial as much as possible; and after giving the Lieutenant one or two opportunities and hints to settle matters with Captain Euclid, by the arbitration of the pistol, he signified to him, that it would be advisable to exchange into another regiment, or altogether sell out of the 145th.

The Lieutenant accepted the former alternative, and promised to negotiate an exchange as soon as possible. Meanwhile he was completely cut by the corps, and during the time he waited for an answer to the application for leave of absence, being relieved from duty, stalked about

ke a miserable degraded outcast, who had committed some crime which placed him without the pale of society.

Under these circumstances, much as I despised and condemned him, so utterly unhappy did he seem, that I could not choose but pity him. Whether or not he discovered this by my countenance, as I occasionally passed him, I know not; but he made several efforts to accost me. His meanness of spirit even prompted him to bow, although I omitted to return the compliment, he at length forced a visit upon me one morning, as I was at breakfast in my dressing-room. Naturally surprized, I arose, and was about to request him to withdraw, but he threw himself upon my good feeling, and begged my hearing, in terms so abject, that my pity for his situation got the better of my contempt for his pusillanimous conduct, and as he asked my advice, I felt myself quite unable to refuse him my audience.

It happened unfortunately that Major Claverhouse at that moment paid me a visit in my quarters, to consult with me about some private theatricals he had it in contemplation to set

agoing in the fort. He stopped short on observing Bullyman seated at my table, instantly turned upon his heel, and quitted the room.

I saw that the incident would be likely to lead me into difficulties; and the event proved that I was not far out in my conjecture. Accordingly, after the morning parade, I found the visit of Lieutenant Bullyman had been canvassed amongst the officers of the 145th, and, as the cant term goes, they rather tipped me the cold shoulder. In addition to this, the Major spoke to me upon the subject in a tone and manner I thought highly offensive and uncalled for. I answered him with considerable warmth, and was put under arrest for my pains. In an evil hour, I resolved to rebel against opinion and authority, and conceiving myself cut without rhyme or reason, disdaining all explanation, invited Bullyman to spend the evening in my quarters. That invitation sealed my fate.

Bullyman was a designing knave, as well as a coward. He managed to get me to espouse his quarrel, and feel a deeper resentment against my brother officers. During the time I was under arrest, his leave of absence arriving, he

mitted the regiment for good, leaving me in  
version the quarrel he had been too great a  
ward to fight out.

In short, I was released from arrest one morn-  
g, and, after a reprimand from the Major,  
dered to join my company.

After the drill was over, as I still retained a  
ughty and contemptuous feeling towards some  
my brother officers, I joined a party, consist-  
g of two or three officers belonging to another  
the corps stationed in the fort, in a walk to  
e town of Inverness. After spending the day  
wandering over the field of Culloden, we  
turned, dined at Inverness, and afterwards  
rolled home.

## CHAPTER XIV.

What! shall we have incision? Shall we imbrue?  
Then death rock me asleep, abridge my doleful days!  
Why then, let grievous, ghastly, gaping wounds  
Untwine the sisters three! Come, Atrophos, I say.

SHAKESPEARE.

ON entering the mess-room, I found some half dozen of my brother officers, who had remained after mess, seated before the fire, in the enjoyment of a glass of whiskey toddy and a cigar. They looked round when I entered, but did not speak to me, and continued their conversation amongst themselves. I took a turn or two up and down the room, and at length, stopping in rear of the circle, I looked hard at them individually.

"A cold night, gentlemen," said I.

"Very," returned the Major, drily, who was one of the party.



I took another turn. My blood boiled in my veins, and I felt myself about to lose all control over my actions. If any man would but have spit in my face, methought I could have been happy. However, as no one either insulted or made room for me in the circle, I continued my quarter-deck promenade.

Presently the adjutant, entering the room, requested a word with the commandant. He rose to accompany him, and unbuckling his sword, threw it on his chair.

"I shall be back, Plume," said he, "in two minutes. Let nobody take my seat."

I stepped up to the fire, took the sword from the chair, and was about to seat myself.

"Stay, Sir," said Plume, "that is Major Clevering's seat. He is returning. See, he has left his sword."

"I'm quite aware of it," said I, seating myself. "I heard himself say so. A cold night this, gentlemen, as I before observed. Let me stir the fire for you."

In saying this, I thrust the Major's steel scabbard and blade between the bars of the grate,

stirred up the fire, and left the instrument sticking amidst the glowing coals.

The circle sat in a state of perfect amazement. They looked from one to the other, then at the sword, then at me, as I sat, with arms folded, watching the glowing falchion as it became red-hot, and then at each other again. Every man there knew the Major well, his high and chivalrous spirit, and his impatience at any thing like insubordination. More than one feared him, and all toadied him to the top of his bent.

During at least a quarter of an hour that he was absent, no one uttered a sentence. Not a man sipped his grog, but all pulled with double vigour at their cigars—puff, puff, puff, puff. At length, a footstep approached, and the door opened; every head turned like lightning towards it. It was the mess waiter, to clear away some of the things. Again their eyes turned upon the Major's red-hot brand, with looks of curiosity and amaze—

And now sits expectation in the air.

The Major's armed heel and well known step at length were really heard in the passage, and the

Next moment he was in the room. He advanced towards his seat before the fire. 'Twas filled. He stopped, and was about to demand his chair, when his eye fell upon his trusty falchion turned into a poker, and left between the bars of the grate. Not the Highland Thane, when he beheld the table full, and the blood-boltered Banquo on his stool could have so glared, as glared Major Hotspur Clavering upon his sometime weapon. There was no occasion for him to ask, "which of you have done this." The thing spoke for itself. He touched me sharply on the shoulder; his face was livid with rage, as I started up and confronted him. Pointing to the door as a signal for me to follow him, he turned upon his heel, and swiftly left the room. Traversing the passage, he glanced over his shoulder to see that I was behind, and passed out into the barrack square. He walked so rapidly, that I was compelled to mend my pace in order to keep him in sight. When about the middle of the square had been gained, he turned round and accosted me.

"Can you wield the weapon, you have put to so unworthy a use?" said he.

"I can," answered I.

"Be cautious, young man," said he, "I warn you that I am an expert swordsman. Unless you are yourself a good fencer, decline the weapon."

"Have no compunction, Major Clavering," said I, "the chances are, you'll find your match."

"I am glad to hear it," returned he, "'tis something out of the common custom. But the insult you have put upon me, is also singularly offensive. This is no common case—one of us must fall. The hour that saw the affront must not expire before it is wiped out. Get your weapon, and friend instantly. Pass the fort, and await me. If first, beside the cairn upon the heath. Do you agree to this?"

"I do," said I.

"In a quarter of an hour I shall expect you," continued he, as he turned and sought his quarters.

Amongst the officers of the dépôt of the —th Highlanders, I had several friends. One of them, with whom I was most intimate, had advised me that very morning to pick a quarrel amongst the officers of the 145th, as a means of righting myself with them. He could not very well, therefore, refuse to accompany me, and him I sought.

Tired with the day's excursion, he had retired to bed; but rose immediately upon my making known my errand. He rather demurred to the settlement of the affair with our regimental words; but, at length, agreeing in consideration of the oddity of my affront to the Major, we took our way to the trysting place, as soon as he was fully equipped.

The moon shone out brightly, and the snow was upon the ground, when we left the gates of Fort George. I had had but small time for reflection; yet, as I passed the walls of the fortress, I felt that the crisis of my fate had arrived. For the first time it struck me, that at best I was about to fight a losing battle. So strange is it, that the violence of one's feeling under insult or irritation, allow no pause till the entertainer has stepped so far that return is impossible. Five minutes back, I felt that if I could be foot to foot with my rapier point opposed to the breast of any one of my brother officers whose supercilious conduct had injured my honour, I should be happy. I had sought, and found my quarrel—fixed upon one worthy my arm and weapon, and now, for the first time, "consideration came;"

though too late to "whip the offending Adam out of me." "Beware," says Polonius, "of entrance to a quarrel; but being in, bear it, that the opposer may beware of thee." I was fairly embarked in one; would that I had been wary of engaging in it! The latter part of the advice was now all I had to follow.

When on the open heath, the night was so clear—one of those bright lovely nights so common in the north during winter—that the country road was distinguishable almost as plain as on a sunny day.

"I wish you had fixed this business upon any one but Major Clavering," said my companion, "for then we might have had a chance of coming out of it without anything very serious. Now, however, you have placed us all on a quick-sand. Major Clavering is a wicked fellow, when he's regularly angry. You'll find no boys' play with him. Why didn't you take an opportunity of something sulky amongst the subs.

"I know not," said I; "he almost asked for the quarrel I thought, and so I indulged him. How mean you by the word wicked, as applied to Major Clavering of the —th?"

"Why not exactly in the sense the chaplain of the regiment would understand it," returned my friend. "I mean, that after the particular way in which you have sought him, he'll be likely to want letting blood to some extent, before he cools down. What you have put in his pipe will want a deal of smoking, that's all. But see, there's the cairn, and as I live he's here before us."

It was even so; the cairn was now not two hundred yards from us; and a figure was sitting backwards and forwards as restlessly and wildly as Elshender, the recluse, when first seen by Hobbie Elliot, on Micklestone Moor.

The Major was alone. He had sought and found the friend he meant to employ, desired him to follow, grabbed his case of pistols, and, glowing with fervour, longing for action, anxious to wash out the stain his honour had received, had hurried to the trysting-place, where the effervescence of his passion kept him at boiling heat till he found his antagonist set before his rapier's point.

It is singular, but not the less true, that

there are a sort of men who are thus insane upon this one point—the duello. Kind and warm-hearted fellows, good soldiers, and “tall fellows,” as Falstaff has it, most estimable men, jolly companions, and even by no means easy of affront, or seeking for the quarrel, and yet withal so ready to embark in any cause which is likely to bring on the duello; and so utterly unmanageable and opposed to any sort of arrangement short of “bullets wrapt in fire,” that even the most trifling and fancied offence, when once taken, must be wiped out by the ceremonious cartel. Irishmen and Frenchmen, the best hearted fellows in the world, are more apt to fancy themselves called upon to go out, than perhaps the natives of any other country.

Major Clavering was one of these most punctilious gentlemen; and certainly, at the present moment, he had cause to demand most ample satisfaction for the affront I had put upon him. He stopped in his hurried walk as soon as we reached the cairn, and lifted his foraging-cap to me as our eyes met. The angry spot was upon his brow, and I felt, with Richard,



that "for one or both of us the time was come." There was—there could be—no possible way of accommodating matters, after having seriously offended such as Clavering.

"My friend will be here immediately," said he. See, he approaches. I have my pistols here, in case our swords are insufficient. I need not enquire if yours is the regulation blade, since I know none other in the dépôt."

"Major Clavering," said I, "since you have thought proper to open a conversation before we engage in mortal conflict, perhaps you will allow me to say you have not, as commanding officer of the 145th, exactly used me with the consideration and kindness you were bound to do. I have chosen to fix this quarrel upon you, because I have observed that you have, in something, biassed the opinions of the officers of the dépôt; not only sanctioning their coolness towards me, on account of my advocating the cause of Lieutenant Bullyman, but actually, I am informed, advising my being put in the corps."

"I would you had sought an explanation before, young man," said he; "and this might have been avoided. We all of us hoped for a

reconciliation ; but your great spirit, and indomitable pride, prompted you to treat every one of your brother officers with so much arrogance and hauteur, that it was impossible for any one to make advance towards a reconciliation after the offending object had removed himself from amongst us. No, Sir ; you have no cause of complaint. You chose between the society of your brother officers, and one who had brought disgrace upon the regiment. You became the friend, adviser, and associate of a cowardly scoundrel, whose pleasure it was, since the day he first joined, to offer gratuitous insult to his companions in arms, and then sneak out of the responsibility, by sheltering himself under the regulations of the service. You witnessed his last effort, and how he evaded giving satisfaction to the man who challenged him, and you ought to have avoided his society as that of a person unfit to live amongst men of honour. This is, however, now useless recrimination. You have conferred a singularly offensive insult upon me. I know you sufficiently to be aware that you will be ready and willing to answer it. Enough ! here is Captain O'Toole. I have possessed him with our grounds of quarrel. Draw ! Sir."

He drew the weapon he had brought with him, as he finished speaking, and putting himself in attitude, our swords crossed. The first half-dozen passes were sufficient to show me, and I not before known it, that the regulation sword of the infantry of the present day is the most useless weapon that ever was invented in any age. To fence with it, was impossible; and after some half-dozen clumsy thrusts and a few parries, the Major, already at boiling-heat, being foiled in his lunges, changed his play, and coming upon me, rained such a shower of blows, that had I not been extremely cautious, on the given ground, he must have some how or other cut me down. He fought like a red-hot devil at a wake, and swung his blade about as though it had been a shilalegh.

How long this might have lasted, before one or other of us got an ugly wound, I cannot tell; but our swordsmanship was stopped by an accident to one of the weapons. In returning one of the Major's downright blows, and being irritated at receiving a cut, which had lacerated my cheek, I gave my blow with such good will, that my sword broke in two, like a piece of

cast-iron, and, saving the hilt and some half a foot of the remaining blade, I stood weaponless, and at his mercy.

He was too chivalrous in spirit to take advantage, and immediately dropped his point; and our seconds stepped up.

"Lend me your weapon, Counterblast," said I. "Major, I thank you for your courtesy; you had me something at advantage."

"I think the affair is finished, Captain O'Toole, is it not?" said Lieutenant Counterblast to the Major's second. "I'm glad it is no worse."

"Finished!" returned O'Toole; "is it finished you're maning? Not exactly. By the powers! I think it's hardly commenced. My principal is anything but satisfied. He rather desires to finish the affair like a gentleman. Hand your friend the weapon he asks for, Sir. Major Clavering is quite ready."

"I do not quite relish this sort of thing, Captain O'Toole," said Counterblast. "We shall get into a scrape, I fear. I feel inclined to withdraw my principal. Enough, and more than enough, has been done. Major Clavering

as had the best of it in every way ; he ought to be satisfied. Can we not arrange it without proceeding further, think ye?"

"By the Lord, lad! but you don't seem to understand the code of honour," said O'Toole. "You talk of withdrawing and arranging in the same breath. Permit me to say, the Major and I had arranged to come here to fight. There has been quite enough shilly-shallying in the hundred and forty-fifth, lately, methinks. We don't want to be altogether laughed out of the port. If you withdraw your friend, I hope you mean to take his place."

"I understand the laws of honour," returned counterblast, "quite as well, and I think indeed something better than you do yourself, Captain O'Toole; and I am of opinion that this duel has proceeded far enough. I shall, however, so far concede to yours and the Major's wishes, as to permit of the affair's proceeding. But I will have no more sword-work. Give them a shot a-piece, and there an end. We have the weapons ready."

"Agreed, agreed," said the Captain, stepping up to his principal, to advertize him of this

change of weapons ; “ agreed, agreed : ‘ odds bullets and triggers,’ as the man says in the play, ‘ let the pistol decide the matter out of hand.’ I’m clearly of your opinion.”

To be brief, then, we were placed with the usual distance between us.

As I received my weapon, the remembrance of the dreadful scene I had witnessed, on the occasion of my former duel with Lord Hardenbrass, came so vividly before me, that I shuddered at the prospect of another such catastrophe, and resolved to receive the Major’s fire, and not to return it. Counterblast, however, advised me to take good aim, and fire quick. “ It’s your only chance,” said he ; “ he’s a dead shot. Be steady, or you’re lost.”

I turned my eye, as he retired, upon my antagonist, and saw by his look that the hint was not to be neglected. My intent was instantly changed, and all qualms of conscience silenced by the angry feeling which arose at the evident sanguinary intentions of both my opponent and his second. The next moment, Captain O’Toole gave the signal, and we fired.

A stunning blow upon the head, sent me

eling three or four paces from where I stood. recovered, and saved myself from falling; and the smoke of my pistol blew from before my eyes, I beheld my opponent stretched at full length upon the heath. His ball had grazed my temple—mine, had pierced his heart!

## CHAPTER XV.

There's nothing level in our cursed nature  
But direct villany. Therefore, be abhorred  
All feasts, societies, and throngs of men !  
His *semblable*, yea, himself, Timon, disdains  
Destruction fang mankind !

SEA

I WILL pass over the scene which  
and my feelings upon this unhappy  
Suffice it, the next morning found  
Counterblast, and O'Toole, prisoners  
separate barrack-rooms, under close  
felt that I was irretrievably ruined, and  
my friend and second would share in  
grace.

My anticipations were not unfounded  
as I myself was concerned. The matter  
subject of court-martial. The very  
whom I had met as friends, and w



assembled when I first joined at Fort George, were again ordered to reassemble for my trial. The evidence was conclusive, and clearly in my disfavour. I had thrust a duel upon my commanding-officer by the most unwarrantable insult, given before several of the officers of the corps. I was found guilty, and cashiered; the two seconds getting off with a severe reprimand. The sentence was a hard but a just one, and I was pitied by the whole corps. When too late, they saw the injury they had inflicted upon me; and interest was subsequently made, even at head-quarters to procure my re-instatement. It, however was in vain. I had no powerful friend here of my own to back my suit; and like Rob Roy, I looked east, west, north, and south, and found neither hold nor hope, neither beild nor shelter. I was a broken man! Where to go, or what to do, I knew not. About a hundred pounds remained in my purse, after I had paid and settled the few debts I had contracted whilst with the 145th; and the same night of the day I was released from arrest, found me a wanderer upon the heath, I neither knew nor cared in what direction so that every stride I took removed me further from the walls of Fort


George, where I had thus been, as I conceived, victimized and disgraced.

It was the depth of winter; the night winds pierced through my chest, like a stiletto; yet I heeded neither "winter nor rough weather." There was too hot a summer in my bosom for me to feel aught in the shape of bodily pain at that moment.

When I was about to leave my barrack-room, my servant, a rear-rank man of the company to which I belonged a good-natured, honest-hearted fellow, who had eat, drank, and slept at the sound of the drum for the last twenty years of his life, suspecting from my manners and look that I was about either to cut my throat or do some other rash act, after pottering about the room, and offering me a hundred different little attentions, suddenly stepped before me, and thus accosted me:—"Your honour's not a-going to leave us to-night?" he said.

"I am, Cochrane," I answered; "why do you ask?"

"There's no conveyance, that I know of, from Cumbletown," said he, "after eight o'clock to-night, Sir. Have you ordered anything to fetch you away?"



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"I have not," I said.

"Then how do you mean to go, Sir?" he quired.

"Walk, Cochrane," I replied.

"Where to, Sir," he said, "on such a night as this?"

"I know not, my man," I answered: "per-  
formance into my grave."

"Be persuaded, Sir," he said; "I'll take  
our things early in the morning, before the  
berdeen coach passes. I know you want to  
get away quietly, and we can be off before  
night."

"My good fellow," I replied, "I'm off even  
now. I could not remain here another night  
or worlds. It would kill me. I wish to avoid  
seeing any one."

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" exclaimed the poor  
fellow, "I'm very sorry;—we're all sorry to part  
with you, Sir. The men all have a liking for you,  
even though you've been so short a time  
with us."

"Farewell, my good fellow," I said.

"I've never had a hard or unkind word from  
you," continued the soldier. "I've served many

officers, ay, and nursed many on their death-beds in the West Indies; but I never was more sorry to part with a master than I am with you. You've been too kind to me, Sir. I'm sorry for your misfortune; and if I was out of the service, I'd follow and serve you for nothing."

"My good fellow," said I, "this pains me. You owe me no gratitude. I've treated you but as a master should treat a good and faithful servant; one who has anticipated my every wish. Adieu! Send my baggage to the Aberdeen coach to be forwarded, and here is for your pains."

"Let me shake you by the hand, master," said the poor fellow, weeping. "We shall never meet again. I was to go out with you in the first draught to the West Indies. Now I shall go without you."

The rules of the service are strict. No officer, in any circumstance, can well shake hands with a private in the same regiment; and I was about to draw back as the honest fellow held out his hand to press mine.

"Pshaw!" said I, "what have I to do with the service now? Am I not degraded, dis-

traced, and cashiered? There's my hand, my good fellow," said I. "Farewell; we shall meet no more."

I put ten guineas into his hard fist, as I swung it. When he saw it was gold, he followed me to return it. But I refused to receive it back. Had it been two thousand, his fidelity and goodness of heart deserved it all.

I was now like Lear upon the open heath, exposed to the pelting of the pitiless storm, and that, too, in the climate of the north. My brain was so excited with all that had happened to me, that I held onwards straight ahead, like a ship steering across the trackless ocean. The night was dark, and the snow stung my visage, like so many sharp bodkins. I had no particular intention of reaching any town, but, like the head long cavalier, with care seated behind him, was hurrying onwards, as much to conquer my mental misery by severe bodily exercise, as any other purpose. I felt it a relief when I considered that each step was bearing me away from the sound of the spirit-stirring drum, and the ear-piercing fife at Fort George.

The wind lulled for a few minutes, as I ran against a pile of moss-clad earth, or rock, which

in the darkness I had not seen. As I felt it with my hand, I suddenly recognised it as the trysting-place of my recent disastrous duel with Major Clavering. The last prolonged note of the trumpet as the tattoo finished, like the faint blast of Roland's horn, died away in the distance, as I stopped beside the fatal cairn. It seemed like the farewell of all my future hopes and prospects. It told me, in the somewhat hack-nied words of the great wonder of all time, that for ever more "my occupation was gone." "The neighing steed, the plumed troop, the pride and circumstance of glorious war," had all, I thought, in that prolonged note of the shrill trump, bidden me an eternal adieu. I shall never forget that sound,—“the knell of my departed joys.”

I shuddered as I quitted the cairn, and, notwithstanding the increasing hurricane, pushed onwards over the heath. For some time I continued to face the wind and snow, which at times threatened to stop my breathing with its violence. If I had an intent of going towards any sort of destination, I believe my wild thoughts touched upon Aberdeen. I had a sort of half made up determination to touch there

my way to England. Though what I meant to do in England, or why I should go there at all, it would have puzzled me to say. The idea of seeking my father, or even letting him hear from me, was so completely opposite to my ideas and feelings, that I would have been torn with wild horses rather than either have appeared before him, or written to him. Friends, I had none that I could think of applying to, and I seemed to myself a miserable, dejected, degraded outcast.

"Destruction fang mankind !" said I. "Earth held me roots.

Timon will to the woods, where he shall find  
The unkindest beast less cruel than mankind."

The howling blast was now answered by a roaring sound. I had walked for some hours, and in the dark, deviated from the straight line. I was brought to a stand by the wild waters which washed the coast of that part of Scotland. I paused to consider, for the first time since I started, what my intentions were, and whither I was bound. A night walk to one of my iron

frame was nothing; but still, to be cast away in this howling wilderness, on such a night as this, was something dangerous. That, however, I cared not a rush about; but as the severe cold had gradually penetrated to my heart, it had somewhat cooled my feelings, and reflection came to aid me. I sat down in the snow, and listened to the heavy and monotonous dash of the waves at my very feet. So lost was I in my cogitations, that I felt myself rapidly falling into a sound sleep. In a moment, I remembered that to sleep was to die. The love of life is as singular as it is strong. Why I should have wished to prolong so unfortunate a life I know not; but I successfully combated the drowsy feeling, started up, and, turning my back upon the sea, once more at a venture wandered over the waste.

The snow had now, in some places, drifted so deeply, that I made but little way, and the exertion of walking kept me warm. It mattered not which way I went, as I felt confident I should obtain no shelter for that night. All I could do was, by moving onwards during this long and dark night, to keep myself alive.




Silently and laboriously, therefore, I wended on. Hour after hour found me plunging into some deep wreath of snow, and re-threading my steps out of it again. No sounds met my ear, but the rushing winds, and the deep cry of the bog bittern.

At length to my joy, yes, I actually felt joyful, when I beheld the first faint streaks of the breaking day. "Great evils (says Shakspeare) medicine the less." From confinement to my room, whilst under arrest, this long and laborious exertion had wearied me. I felt now chilled to death too; the cold struck more intensely to my feelings just at this time, than it had done at any other part of the night. As the light became brighter, I looked around me to see where I was, all was enveloped in one white winding sheet, a dreary inhospitable waste.

There was nothing for it but to proceed. It was still so early, that I had slight chance of meeting even a shepherd; and the wind was so violent, and the snow so deep, that it was a service of danger, even for the hardy hill-men to adventure too far, when the storm was at its height.

The snow had now, for the moment, abated,

and day having quite broke, I looked out in every direction in the hope of spying some cottage. Nothing, however was to be seen; no hut, no tree, no shelter of any sort or kind, not even a bird! I had wandered amongst the hills, and was completely cast away. Weary, and sick for want of food, I became almost unable to proceed. The labour of walking in the deep snow was so great, that it took me half-an-hour to gain a hundred yards to the front. At length, I heard far, far away, the bark of a dog. It came fitfully upon the piercing blast; it was evidently miles away, yet I turned towards it as the tempest-tossed barque turns at the signal gun. Steep hills, and ravines filled with drifted snow, lay between me and the assistance I sought. I felt that to gain it was hopeless. It was doubtless some shepherds trying to recover their buried sheep; they would probably be away before I could reach them. Still I made great efforts, and struggled through more than one deep drift. At length I felt myself failing; as I became more and more faint, a feeling of horror and something like the approach of death seized me. I felt alarmed at the thought of dying in the open heath, alone, miser-



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ably, with no soul to look upon me as I lay. The thought unnerved me. The solitude of the place was startling; my legs failed me, my brain whirled round, and I fell senseless upon the ground.

How long I remained thus embedded in the snow, I know not; but when returning to life, I opened my eyes, and partially regained my senses, I felt myself rather roughly handled by several persons, who had laid me before a roaring turf fire, and with might and main were rubbing my body and limbs with salt.

As I recovered under the operation, I raised myself to look around me and at my tormentors, and felt not a little surprised at the scene which presented itself.

In the first place I was stark naked, surrounded by several females, of all ages, sizes, and shapes, from fourteen, to fourscore and upwards. A young and buxom lass had hold of one of my legs, which she chafed with might and main; an old and blear-eyed crone was in possession of another, one or two others were scrubbing my arms and chest, and one old wife, who was seated upon a stool and supporting my head

in her lap, ever and anon poured a few drops of full-proof whiskey (their universal panacea) down my throat.

The whole affair was managed and gone through, as if it was an every-day occurrence with them. There was no mock modesty with either young or old; they had received my insensible carcase from their shepherd fathers and brothers, who had found me lying stiff in the snow, as they searched for their scattered flock, had proceeded to strip, and baste, and roast me before the fire, just the same as if I had been one of their own kith and kin, or a frozen pig, or frost-bitten infant.

As soon as they perceived that I was conscious of my unclad and primitive state, they threw an old scarf over my body, and assisting me up, placed me in a sort of dark oven-like opening, which served half the family as a sleeping place. There I lay snug and warm, and except that I was stung and tormented with whole myriads of fleas, might have felt tolerably comfortable.

My kind and hospitable entertainers, now busied themselves in preparing a mess of hot

brose, which they obliged me to wash down my throat with large draughts of milk. In fact, they tended me as though I had been one of their nearest and dearest kindred.

As I lay at leisure in this warm berth, I contemplated the curiosities of the hut I had been brought into. It was a low turf built dwelling, erected against the side of a small hillock. The smoke of the ever-burning peat escaped partially through a hole in the roof, the remainder curled in huge volumes around the interior, making the room so hot and oppressive, that none but these hardy mountaineers could have thriven in such a reeking kiln.

The females, old and young, were for the most part, seated on low stools or broken chairs, and crouching over the peat reek, apparently employed in watching an iron skillet, large enough almost to have served for the witches' cauldron; every now and then one of the younger lasses, at a hint from some of the crones, would start up, heave open the door, a feat (from the violence of the wind) requiring all her strength, and take a look out into the wilderness.

There was hardly anything in the shape of furniture in the apartment, which did not seem encrusted with the smoke and soot of half a century. Three or four children lay upon a collection of sheep-skins in one corner, and Crummie, their cow, quietly chewed the cud in another. There was also a small square portion at the opposite end of the hut to where I was deposited in my berth, which was partially partitioned off, forming a sort of inner room.

As I lay observing this specimen of a shepherd's home, I began to wonder what had become of my habiliments, and whether I should ever again be permitted to wear my nether garments, which had contained in the depths of their pockets the small stock of cash remaining to me in the world, the trifling hundred pounds I had brought with me from Fort George. Alas! how little did I then know of Highland honesty, and how much less did my injurious suspicions entitle me to the Highland welcome I had so lately experienced.

As soon as I felt myself somewhat restored, I determined to rise; and after thanking the very handsome specimen of a Highland peasant lass who had been attending upon me, and

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performing the office of nurse, I begged for my habiliments. She brought them to me instantly, and drawing a dilapidated sort of curtain, left me to equip myself.

When I turned out of my crib, however, and attempted to walk towards the assembled party, with the assistance of my bare legged and short-skirted attendant, I found myself quite unequal to the task. My brain whirled, my limbs again seemed unable to support me, and I was fain once more to recline upon my couch. In fact, I felt so exceedingly unwell, that I was compelled to lie where I was, from utter inability to rise. In short, the violent beating of my pulse, the scorching heat which burned me up, and the agony of my head, shewed me that I was likely to have a violent fever. I was not mistaken, but grew worse and worse towards nightfall, and before the next morning, delirium coming on, I lay in considerable danger for some days.

All I remember of that day, was the return of the shepherds towards nightfall, and the bustle consequent upon their supper being served to them. They gave up their rude couch to the invalid, and I was tended by one or two of the

females during that night, whilst the mainder of the family disposed themselves to rest in different parts of the hovel. In the morning I lay dangerously ill for more than a week in the shepherd's hut, and during this time was nursed and tended by these pitiable Highlanders with the greatest care and kindness, and I remained their debtor for my life twice saved.

When sufficiently recovered, I used to take gentle exercise. On these occasions I was accompanied by my unsophisticated and uneducated nurse, the girl who had from first to last been my principal attendant. She was a dark-haired girl of about seventeen. Strong and athletic in her figure was perfect; and had she been clothed in a full suit of armour, which she would have been quite equal to the weight of, she would have looked a perfect Joan of Arc.

The Highland females have been generally noted by the English, for irregular features, cheeks as red as their top-knots, awkward ungainly figures, great splay feet, and hands big enough for a conjuror to hide the pack. A sort of female Dugald creturs. So I do not, however, altogether the case, as many

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lower orders of Scottish females are patterns of rustic beauty, and albeit sometimes rather in the Rubens' style, yet their Amazonian forms are perfect.

Euphemia Mc Tavish, the eldest daughter of the shepherd under whose roof I had thus been sheltered, was quite a rose in the wilderness. The colours on her cheek were even more beautiful than the hues of the flowers of the garden. Her features were somewhat large, but beautifully formed, with eyes like the beads of a wax doll, teeth perfectly faultless, and hair which, by one shake when unconfined, would, I should think, have covered her whole body, like *Magdalène*. Her figure, I have said, was rather of the largest, but then it was perfectly candid in its way; and had she been clad in fashionable silks and satins, and wafted for a promenade to the west end of the town, she would have created quite a sensation amongst dandies and loungers on the Regent Street promenade.

Accustomed to the biting winds of the hills, and frequently for whole days helping her father and her relatives to look after their flocks, the daily walk of this child of nature, with head

thrown back, and upright form, was well liked by the girls, who had undergone the training of the drill serjeant and the fashionable dancing-master, could have approached, even with impunity.

With this beautiful shepherdess, then, I named Marsala, I wandered about the first few days after my illness. She spoke a dialect so broad, that at first I could not understand her, but after a few days' conversation, I began to comprehend her northern accent, and she to listen more profitably to the more refined and scholarly talk of the Englishman.

The shepherd and his family, which consisted of three generations, had made every effort to render their residence as comfortable for me as their means would allow. The small closet-like apartment, in their spacious house or cottage, had been given up for my use, and two old crones, with Euphemia, had been sent to lodge with the married son. The cot was half a mile up the glen, so that it was tolerably comfortable, and, considering the situation to which I was reduced, almost happy. Indeed, the change of life was so great, living

amidst the storm and the tempest, nursed to sleep by the roaring winds at night, and awoke again by the howling blast in the morning, that perhaps no other situation could have so effectually banished my cares from my remembrance. In short, I gradually became, as it were, one of the family; and, like Alfred in the peat-herd's cottage, was often to be found watching, that the oatmeal bannock did not burn over the peat fire.

The whole family, indeed, became attached to me; and in the long and dreary winter nights, as we sat around the glowing turf, they would listen to the tales, stories, and songs I sought to amuse them with, in the most extraordinary state of wonderment and admiration.

On these occasions the eccentric Euphemia would nestle herself down on the floor beside me, and gaze up into my face with the delight of a child of three years old; she had constituted herself my servant and nurse, and had no more idea of any impropriety in following me wherever I went, like a pet spaniel, than a wild Indian would.

As to the rest of the family, innocent in thought and deed, they were well pleased to see

their children, one and all, pay attention to the English officer, and anticipate all his wants. He was sick, sorry, and homeless, and that was a sufficient reason that they ought to shelter and treat him with care and kindness.

"I must be thinking soon of leaving you, Donald," said I, one evening, when beginning to feel myself growing strong enough to travel. I considered I ought no longer to inconvenience these generous peasants with my company. "I must be soon now leaving you," said I.

"Hout tout," returned Donald, "fat de'il's the mon talking of? Leave us, quotha! what for leave us, mon? Ye'll no think o't, I hope, till the snow's clean awa."

"Why, my good fellow," said I, "I cannot think of staying a day after I'm fit for travel. I've burthened you too long already."

"Aweel, aweel, mon," returned the shepherd, "dinna ye fash yer sel about the burthen o't. When we wish ye awa, ye'll ken it soon eneuch, I'se warrant ye. An ye talk any more about that I'se tell ye, I'm sorry we ever picked ye up from the snow. Ye'll no get away from this quite so easily, as I can tell you."

"What, then," said I, "do you mean to keep me here all winter, Donald?"

"Hout ay! winter, autumn, summer, and, if ye like to stop amang us, all yer life ye'll stay wis' us. Troth, but we'll make a shepherd o' ye. Ye say you've no friends in your own land, and the red coats ha'e turned their backs upon ye, what for no stop amang us? I like ye, mon: yer the only Englisher ever was acquaint wi', and I like ye much. The fule bodies of English wha have come away to shoot with the laird at the castle, I did na muckle care for ava; they were o'er aw for me. But ye're clean another guess sort o' a body, and I think there's the making o' a gude hill mon in ye, when ye get strang. Ay, ay, we'll mak a right down shepherd o' ye yet."

"But, my good Donald," said I, "you put it out of my power to stop, till the weather breaks up even, because you will not take any remuneration for my bed, board, and education."

"Dinna mention it, lad, again," said Donald, sharply; "we don't do the like o'that here. You've gi'en the gude wife a braw gow chain,

fit for a born duchess ; and the lass, too, has gotten rings from ye, enough to wed her, when she's minded to wed."

It was thus those hospitable people me, and therefore, finding my company disagreeable to them, but that they wished me to stay, the novelty of the too, rather helping me to forget my late tunes, I resolved, whilst the weather was so untoward, to shelter myself under a humble roof.

Now that I was becoming stronger, I loved to penetrate into the glens and fairs around, and explore their solitudes, this time more congenial to my frame than any other scene to which I could be introduced. At other times I spent my time rambling with the handsome Euphem, the weather permitted, listening to her conversation, and telling her of the wonders of the world abroad, as much amused by her childish astonishment as she was at the tales I related her.

The weather had somewhat changed, and I had thus taken refuge with this fair creature, when incessant snow, had succeeded to

ins. The rivulets and burns, which, with gentle murmur, were wont to glide through the waste, or leap down the glens and gulleys, were now swollen into little torrents, and in many places in the flats, where they had become jammed up, had accumulated into tiny lakes.

Euphemia, with her unshod feet, a shepherd's baud, thrown scarfwise, across her snowy bosom, a remnant of plaid thrown over her head in place of bonnet, and her tartan petticoat, a world too short for her well-grown limbs, was often now by her sire's command in the hills from daybreak until near nightfall. Sometimes, over night, she would make me promise to find her out, and tell me where she thought it most likely I should fall in with her. Occasionally I kept my word, and spent hours chatting to her, and listening to her somewhat original conversation. To some her manners might have appeared bold, but her perfect innocence threw so great a charm over everything she said or did, that it was impossible to quarrel with this freedom.

"This, methought, is the prettiest low-born lass that ever ran on the green sward. Nothing she does, or says, but smacks of something greater than herself."

## CHAPTER XVI.

May never glorious sun reflex his beams  
Upon the country where you make abode !  
But darkness, and the gloomy shade of death  
Environ you, till mischief and despair  
Drive you to break your neck, or hang yourself.

Thou art in a parlous state, shepherd.

SHAKSPERE.

ONE morning I had accompanied Euphemia in her peregrinations and rounds upon the hills. It was a raw and gusty day, and after driving some of the stragglers from the swamps and morasses they had straggled into, we descended the mountains, and entered the strath along which our road lay, towards home.

Euphemia was still attending to her duties, with her colly dog at her side, as I threw myself, something wearied, upon a heathery bank, and lay and watched her. Wending her way



long the side of a hill, she endeavoured to drive away some of the sheep she saw in dangerous proximity to the still increasing waters. I had never felt my admiration so great for my fair companion as at this moment. Hitherto I had looked upon her as a beautiful child, and though certainly a fine grown child, yet so infantine in manner, and although extremely talented, so untaught and ignorant of the ways even of persons in her own sphere, that except as a beautiful specimen of rustic loveliness, I had hardly thought about her.

As I watched her now, however, standing erect upon a pinnacle of rock, calling to her dog, and directing his movements after a stray sheep, the wind too blowing her tartans, and her beautiful figure displayed as perfectly as the drapery clings to and makes more lovely the rounded limbs of a statue; as I watched her thus reclaiming some of the luxuriant brown hair which had escaped from the fillet which usually bound it, I thought I had never before seen a more commanding and exquisite form. Unconsciously, I began to look upon her with different feelings to those with which I had hitherto regarded her.

“How happy (methought) ought the man to be, whose ambition prompted him no further than to wear out life amidst these torrents and glens, dreading no enemy, ‘but winter and rough weather,’ his riches consisting in his flock, and his companion such a creature as this lovely Euphemia M‘Tavish. Ah !” said I, “it were, indeed, the happier life,

To be no better than a homely swain.  
To sit upon a hill, as I do now,  
And carve out dials quaintly point by point.  
So many hours must I tend my flock,  
So many hours must I take my rest,  
So many hours must I contemplate,  
So many hours must I sport myself,  
So many days my ewes have been with young,  
So many weeks ere the poor fools will yearn,  
So many years ere I shall shear the fleece.  
So minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, and years,  
Pass’d over to the end they were created,  
Would bring white hairs unto a quiet grave.

“Yes,” continued I, as Euphemia, after successfully extricating her sheep, bounded to the spot and threw herself panting and out of breath by my side, where she lay, her cheek upon her hand listening with the greatest attention, and eyes wide open in wonder and admiration

at my rhapsody. "Ah! my Euphemia!" said  
I, as I patted her cheek,

What a life were this! how sweet! how lovely!  
Gives not the hawthorn bush a sweeter shade  
To shepherds, looking on their silly sheep,  
Than doth a rich embroidered canopy  
To kings that fear their subjects' treachery."

The buoyant spirits of my shepherdess companion were always quieted when I commenced any of my Shaksperian rhapsodies. She was extremely apt, and the melody of the tragic hymn pleased her. Like sweet music, it saddened her spirit, and if she did not understand all she heard, perhaps she did not like it the less for that. At the present time she lay with her bright eyes gazing intently up in my face, and an expression of so much melancholy in her countenance, that I finished my quotation abruptly, and was about to take the hand which lay upon the neck of the faithful dog, who was her constant companion. She anticipated me, however, seized upon my offered hand, and carrying it to her mouth, covered it with kisses. This was the first announcement to me that

the artless shepherdess entertained a feelings towards the careless idler helped to pass away the time by sauntering on her side, than those of common friends. I felt startled and angry with myself at the announcement.

"Euphemia," said I, "how is this? my pretty maiden? 'Tis the first time tears visit those laughing eyes. What dost thou say to thee?"

For some time she continued silent, holding her face in her hands. I drew her towards me and as I kissed away the tears in her eyes, she coaxed her to tell me in express terms what she which I now too well knew.

"Heed me not," said she, "I'm but a poor bairn, and weep at what I sould be glad to weep because ye're now recovered from your illness."

"Why do you weep for that, Euphemia?" said I.

"Because," she returned, "now you are well, you'll soon be leaving Glen Orchis never to return. I shall never again find one so kind as to sing to me the songs you have sung."

such words as you have spoken. Oh, don't leave our hills for the southern land, where, ye say, ye hae no friends. Stay with me, and I'll be your sister, indeed; indeed I loe ye far better than any sister ye hae in the lowlands."

As I gazed upon the announcer of her own feelings towards me, and regarded her exquisite face and form, thus thrown in my way, far far away amongst the lonely and silent mountains, with no witnesses to our loves, but perhaps the untlered monarch of the waste couching in his bed of fern, my heart was touched.

"Euphemia," said I, "you might have had cause to hate me more than you can possibly love me. I did intend to leave Glen Orchis, but it was before I knew any one in it entertained for me other sentiments but those of friendship. You say truly, when you say I have nothing in the south. I have even worse than nothing, for I am an outcast, with a brand set upon me. I am a disgraced and broken man, without purse, profession, or prospect. For one minute only I have hesitated whether I should leave you at this spot for ever, or, for ever remaining unknown and forgotten by my kindred,

and with thee for my companion, wear  
life amongst these hills. It is past, I  
firm and irrevocable is my resolution.  
mine own, my beautiful. I have still  
left to suit me all points for a shepherd.  
We will buy sheep, take a cot somewhere  
at hand, and part no more. The  
have kissed, my Euphemia, is dyed  
blood of a fellow creature. By the law  
and man it stands condemned. Such  
however, I offer it to thee. But how  
Phœmia," said I, as I kissed her forehead.  
extricated myself from the embrace she  
me with. "I am a hot-headed and  
ingly inconsiderate youth. Not all time  
upon the frozen ridges of the Grampians  
could cool down the fire thy beauty  
hath raised. The wolf is in the fold,  
'till Holy Church incorporate two in  
good Friar Laurence says, we'll have  
pastorals, no more hill-side rambles.  
look upon thee, I need not wonder  
' a sceptre's heir thus affected  
hook.'"

I arose, as I spoke, to proceed to

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me. The rains, I have said, had been both violent and of long continuance. For many days there had been no cessation in their fall. On this day, however, the weather had been somewhat fairer, and had allowed of our loitering longer than usual in our ramble. We had rested upon the side of a small hillock. The rivulet which wound half around it in its ordinary course, was now a perfect torrent, and completely environed us. Without any perceptible cause, within the last hour, the waters on every side had swollen, and were rushing and whirling in almost every direction through the strath we had descended to. The collyer, as if conscious of our situation, threw his head in the air, and uttered a long-drawn howl. The first thought of Euphemia was for the safety of her sheep. In the next glance she threw around her, she saw reason to fear for mine and her own escape.

While we stood on a little hillock, almost petrified with astonishment, the waters, foaming and whirling in a hundred directions and evidently risen around us. There was no time for deliberation. Euphemia grasped me by the hand, and pointed to a bridge which

crossed the streamlet about a quarter of a mile from us. It was one of those ancient structures frequently to be seen amongst the hills, an old grey-looking narrow bridge, which had perhaps witnessed the march of Bruce's soldiers, and since then had aided the Covenanters, and hill-folk in their gatherings and contentions. Its very look spoke of battle, flight and pursuit; a grey and moss-clad remnant of other days, bleaching in the solitude of the moors, like the pyramid in the Desert.

The banks, where it was thrown across, were higher than elsewhere, and the rivulet consequently deeper. . Could we gain that bridge, we might easily escape along the side of the hill on its other side. I seized Euphemia by the hand, and we turned and descended the hillock into the waters where they were shallowest. They were in so much commotion that the task required our utmost care lest we should be lifted from our feet in the attempt. Once or twice we were nearly whirled round by its force. The dog was carried, spite of all his efforts, far away from us before he could get footing upon a dry spot, with at least twenty torrents between him and his mistress. Him we never saw again.

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With my companion fast clutched by one arm around the waist, I reached the heather on the other side. We ran along it, crossed two or three more increasing streams, which seemed to dance on, as though bubbling from the earth, instead of descending from the uplands, and had at last gained the bridge.\*

It now stood isolated amongst the waters, and all around was like the sea. We were upon the only causeway, which was somewhat higher than the moss on either hand, and consequently though under water in many places, yet if we could manage to keep it, we might still gain and cross the bridge.

Huge pine trees, sheep, and masses of thatch, apparently belonging to some cottages in the distance far away, were to be seen whirling about in the flood, as we paused to take breath, and observe more carefully our route.

"Haste ye," said Euphemia, "seize yon staff floating before us, 'twill help ye. Mark weel the white stanes beneath yer feet, and come on." "

Hand in hand we struggled on.

"I ken the causeway weel," said Euphemia.

\* For an account of this extraordinary flood, read Sir John Lauder's work on the subject.

"Mind it turns a bittie here away. Dinna pause, for the love of heaven, for when yon trees gain the arch, the brig falls as sure as death!"

We accordingly kept our eyes now upon the causeway, a foot deep in the water which rushed past, and now upon the collection of huge pine trees which came whirling along in the current of the river towards the devoted and brave old bridge. It was a well-contested race, and likely to prove a dead heat. Sometimes the trees, (which "by the spurs had been plucked up," and were now washed from the forest above) seemed to meet with some rocky impediment in their progress, and would labour and roll over, their huge roots and branches mounting slowly out of the torrent, like some enormous reptile in the agonies of death; then again, becoming detached, and darting downwards in the red stream, they were lost to sight; till at length, spite of our efforts, they reached the bridge before us. I watched the structure, as the engineer watches his sea-built tower when the storm howls loudest. The next moment and we had reached it.

The bridge contained two arches; both were now choked up by the accumulated trees which

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athwart its buttresses, and as more and more  
re each instant added, the pressure (as Euphe-  
a predicted) threatened the safety of the  
ric. There was no time for consideration.  
e moment we had gained a footing upon the  
st stone of the bridge, the dammed up-waters  
shed round its extremity with fearful violence.  
urrying on, we gained its centre. I felt it shake  
rfully as we began to descend, and before  
had gone half-a-dozen paces, with a dreadful  
sh, the entire building seemed to dissolve  
m beneath our feet, and the next instant, we  
re plunged into the roaring flood.

I had attempted to seize upon my companion  
the first symptoms of the dissolution of the  
ric. But she was whirled from my grasp  
th fearful violence, and carried out of my  
ch in an instant. Being a good swimmer, I  
ose after the first immersion, and struck out  
anfully.

I looked in every direction for my companion  
misfortune, but for some moments in vain.  
ckily the greater part of the trees were, for  
e first minute or so, detained by fragments of  
e foundations of the arches, or I must have  
en overwhelmed and borne beneath them.  
nwards rushed the waters; a dozen whirling

pools sucking and choking on either hand. It was all I could do to avoid being drawn within their influence. As I struck out with the stream, I beheld, for one moment, the arms and hands of Euphemia above the surface, and then she disappeared for ever in an eddy towards the shore. Faithful in death, the poor girl was thus the means of saving me. Striking out with all my remaining strength towards the spot, in the hope of reaching her, I got a footing, and was enabled to gain the hill-side. The next instant, on came a mass of trees, followed by a sea of foam. Guided by their progress, I ran along the bank for some distance, in the hope of again seeing Euphemia, and plunging to her rescue. It was, however, in vain ; I saw not even the hem of her garment to guide my search.

I was now alone upon the hill ; the day was drawing to a close ; the sky looked black and awful on all sides, and the whole country before me was inundated with the still increasing waters. It seemed as if the last day had arrived, and there was another flood toward.

So many mishaps had happened to me, that this new misfortune, and the death of my companion, seemed but a consequence of my unlucky stars.

"Yes," said I, as I stood helplessly, gazing on the dreadful flood before me, "the scene I think is likely to end here, and 'tis best so. Affliction seems enamoured of my parts, and I am wedded to calamity.'" I threw myself on the ground, determined to await my fate. Let the floods come, and wash my swollen body into the main of waters, then, Britain, 'I'll leave thee nothing'—not even a grave."

I wept as I thought upon the miserable death of the poor Euphemia. Suddenly the remembrance of her hospitable relatives came upon me, and their likely danger. I felt unwilling to present myself before them; but the thought that they must necessarily be endangered by this raging tempest, as I beheld the planks, beams, and fragments, together with stacks of hay, hurled onwards in the flood, obliterated all idea but that of trying to save.

Their cottage was some three miles from where I then was. It was directly on the other side of the hill. By clambering it, I might cross over, and perhaps reach it before the waters rose to its destruction, as I felt certain it stood on higher ground than that on which I lay.

Jumping up, therefore, I commenced the ascent. Clambering from crag to crag, like

some maniac just escaped from confinement. In gaining the summit, I traversed the precipitous rocks, and descended towards the hospitable

I came, however, too late; the war had broken out, and partially covered the flats below. I saw being the remains of my late refuge. A stream swept along under the bank it had been against, and the inhabitants had either perished in the wreck or perished. Shocked, and with dread, I again turned to the hills to save my own life. I seemed the crawling and climbing, reptile-like, among the ruins of a sinful world. The love of life turned, however, and I felt once more to prolong my unhappy existence.

The rain again descended in torrents. Night came on sudden and dark, and for hours I wandered on the mountain, anxiously for the dawn to appear.

END OF VOL. II.

LONDON.

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THE  
**SOLDIER OF FORTUNE.**

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VOL. III.





THE  
SOLDIER OF FORTUNE.

BY HENRY CURLING, ESQ.

Oh Heaven! that one might read the book of fate;  
 . . . . . Oh, if this were seen,  
 The happiest youth,—viewing his progress through,  
 What perils past, what crosses to ensue,—  
 Would shut the book, and sit him down and die.

SHAKESPEARE

IN THREE VOLUMES.

**VOL. III.**

LONDON:  
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.  
1843.

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THE  
SOLDIER OF FORTUNE.

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CHAPTER I.

I am amazed, methinks ; and lose my way  
Among the thorns and dangers of this world.

Now happy he, whose cloak and cincture can  
Hold out this tempest.

SHAKESPEARE.

I HELD onwards, as well as I could guess, in the direction of a village I knew to be some ten miles off ; but when the dawn appeared, I found myself upon a part of the hills I had not, in my late wanderings ever before visited. A deep ravine was directly before me. The mist was so thick, that I could not make out distinctly whether another hill was beyond it, or the inundated plains. To my surprise, the well-known smell of burning peat saluted my nostrils ; yet,

to all appearance, I was solitary upon the mountains ; up, up upon the summits, where the deer alone loved to rest, far from the habitations of man. I stepped upon a small heathery mound, from whence the peat-reek appeared to emanate, in order to peer over the declivity beyond it, and the roof giving way beneath my feet, I was instantly, as I conceived, precipitated at least half-a-dozen yards into the earth.

To my further astonishment, however, I found myself suddenly introduced from the solitude of the desert, to the society of my fellow-mortals. A turf fire was alight, and all the means and appliances at hand for the manufacture of whiskey. The still was at work. I had tumbled into a whiskey-bothie. The hardy smugglers were as much surprised at my unwonted appearance, as I was for the moment gratified at finding myself, instead of smothering in some kelpie's flow, in their warm and comfortable snugery. They seized me rudely, almost before I could recover my feet or utter a sentence.

“ Ta ga'ger !” said a great burly fellow, who held me firmly by the collar ; “ ta cursed ga'ger amang huz. Hugh ! diel tak ye, mon ; but ye're no blate to come amang us after yon fashion.”

"God! but we ha grippit ye noo," said the fellow who had me on the other side. "Fat deil brought ye speering here for, ye dam'd loon. I thought the floods wad at least ha' keppit yer prying een at hame e'noo. May I be d—— but we'll raddle yer bones, now we ha' gotten a haud o' ye."

"Stay," said a third, bringing a lighted brand from the fire. "It's no just the gauger ava. That chield's frae the Castle. I'll swear it'll just be ane o' the sojer officers frae Bræmar. Fat diel are ye, mon? Just speak out at ance, Cot tam ye."

"Gentlemen," said I, "if you'll allow me to rise, I'll do my best. I'm neither gauger nor soldier-officer from Bræmar, but just an unlucky traveller, escaping from the washes; and who, in endeavouring to cross the mountains, unwarily fell into your infernal dwelling."

"It's a lie—a d—— lie!" said the first speaker. "Ye're frae Argarff or Midmar; and ye shall rue still-hunting this bout, any how. We ken'd the sojers were out the last week, but we thought the floods had gotten them, Cot tam them!"

I had heard, whilst at M'Tavish's cottage, that two gaugers had been caught and murdered by the smugglers, only a week or two

before ; and I also knew, that the detachment which had marched to the castle in Strathdon, had given them so much annoyance, that they had threatened to burn it with its whole garrison. I, therefore, made up my mind to a skinfull of broken bones at the least. How that might have turned out, I cannot say, but our controversy was abruptly brought to a close by the skirling sound of a bagpipe, which seemed to sound in the ravine below.

A narrow zig-zag path formed the approach to the entrance of the bothie, up the precipitous bank from this chasm, and three or four of the highlanders, after listening for a moment, rushed out, and peered over into the mist below. They quickly returned, and spoke rapidly to their comrades, in an unknown and harsh-sounding guttural, which I conceived to be the Gaelic for "the red-coats being upon them."

It was even so. The "unwearied and indefatigable," as they have been somewhere described, the flat-foots, were at hand. What can stop them? Through flood, through fire, they come ; nothing interferes with their discipline ; and here they were, amidst the storm, like slot hounds upon the track. Like Jack Cade's party, they had been out three days. They were still-hunting upon the mountains ; and

laudably employed, burning bothies, making libations of the full proof, and giving the malt to the streams.

At the announcement of the approach of the party, several of the whiskey brewers had attempted to escape, by gaining the summit of the declivity upon which the bothie was reared or excavated. But they found that the rear was guarded by a part of the same detachment who occupied the pass below. They returned, therefore, into their den, bending savage looks upon me as they hastily snatched up one or two long and antique-looking fowling-pieces, in order to make resistance against the on-coming foe.

I had seen from the first, that any attempt at escape would be likely to bring upon me certain destruction from one side or other. I therefore thought it best to remain perfectly quiet under the circumstances, and trust to the jade, Fortune, although she had already played me so many unlucky tricks.

I was not long kept in suspense. The clash and clatter of arms was heard without the bothie; and the well-known word of command to a military party, was shouted out in a somewhat theatrical tone and style, as some three or four armed sailor-looking men, headed by the gauger, rushed in at the doorway, followed by a

couple of king's-officers and a sergeant. I had seen by the demeanour of the smugglers, that they meant mischief, and I was not deceived.

"Ne'er heed the red-coats," shouted the fellow who seemed their leader, "shoot the cursed gauger and his men."

A short, rapid, and unequal combat instantly took place, the smugglers not having time to fire above two shots before they were overwhelmed in their close quarters and captured. The gauger, who had been wounded, however fired again; and the shot taking effect upon my poor person, entered the fleshy part of my shoulder.

I cannot say that I felt any great surprize when I found myself hit in this affray. Like Meg Merrilies, when she was shot by Dirk Hatterick in the cavern of Dernclugh, I thought it would come my way: accordingly, my only astonishment was, that I had not received the gauger's bullet through my brain, instead of through my shoulder. The wound was but trifling; and except that I felt my arm completely benumbed, and found myself bleeding, I should not have at first suspected that I was hurt.

"What manner of man is this?" said the officer, who had entered with the storming-



party, as he stepped up to me whilst the smugglers were being secured, handcuffed, and taken out ; " may I beg the favour of your name ? "

My presence in the bothie was soon explained, and the subaltern seemed delighted at making my acquaintance.

He was a short, slight, *distingué* looking youth, rather theatrical in his style and bearing ; and in everything he said and did, it seemed as though he was thinking more of playing a part upon the boards, in the false-exciting scene, than acting upon life's dull stage in this workaday world.

" You bleed, Sir," said he quickly, as he saw the crimson drops trickling from the sleeve of my coat ; " you have received a hurt in this squabble. Here, Sergeant Cameron, help this gentleman to ascend the path. I will look at your hurt, Sir, with my personal eye. We, luckily, are not altogether unskilled in Galenicals."

When, therefore, I emerged from the hut, I found the flat on the hill-top in possession of a party of a Highland regiment. They stood at ease, with ordered arms, shoulder to shoulder ; their tartans fluttering, and their accoutrements clattering in the furious blast ; whilst one or two smaller parties, were to be seen planted

upon the shelving rock of the ascent beneath, where they looked more like flocks of scarts or sea-gulls, than soldiers.

Altogether, what with the lone and desolate scene—the deep ravine and the swollen torrent which flowed over its face, the misty mountain-tops in the distance, dark-looking and vast, seeming as if they stretched away to the far end of the globe; the soldiers enranked upon the heath, their prisoners in a little knot before them, and the gauger and his assistants employed in setting fire to the bothie, now enveloped in a sheet of flame; the scene was quite romantic, and almost realized some of Sir Walter's descriptions.

The subaltern of the party was as good as his word; he carefully bandaged up my wound, before he attended to any thing else. He then introduced me to the captain of the Highlanders; and whilst the business in hand was being transacted, the detachment was ordered to pile arms; then in the warmth of the blazing bothie, we sat down to the enjoyment of breakfast.

During the meal, I had been somewhat struck with the appearance of the captain of this detachment. He was altogether one of the most

## OF FORTUNE.

singular-looking and silent soldiers it had ever been my fate to fall in with. His subaltern, who appeared indeed the commanding-officer of the party, was altogether the creature of impulse. But the chief, on the contrary, seemed to require every now and then a flap with one of those bladders described by Baron Munchhausen in his Travels to the Moon, where the aristocrats of that curious bourne dropped into a sort of lethargy unless they were frequently boxed, in order to bring them to recollection and activity.

He was a square-built Highlander, with a remarkably good-tempered, though exceedingly Quixotic visage. Stooping much in figure, and wearing like Hudibras a goodly hump upon one shoulder; he had but one eye, and always was accommodated with spectacles on nose.

Although naturally a remarkably stout-built and strong man, hard toil, climate, war, and disease, had reduced him to the mere skeleton of the Hercules he had been in his youth. In short, he cut rather a queer figure beside the picturesquely clad company he ornamented. The casket, however, rude and rough it looked, contained a jewel both rare and priceless; for, notwithstanding the eccentricity of his look and manners, he bore a heart

and disposition, which would have done to the fairest form in nature.

He stood beside his men, as I said, shoulders above his head. His dragoon carried hilt foremost under one arm. A Scotch mull in his hand, from which he continually fed his nose, that although his pockets of his coat were filled like a rappee, the feature seemed capable of exhausting his stock.

His accoutrements were as odd as his for being his own commanding officer upon the hills with his company, the one he chose to exercise authority in, was relieving himself from the annoyance of harnessing himself in his regimentals. Frequently, he was now out in virtual command of his men, in a full suit of tartans upon his being a large pocketed shooting jacket, waistcoat and continuation to match, and a huge tropical wide brimmed straw hat on his head.

"Captain M'Kilt," said the mercurial to his commandant, "I'm going to the hills here: fall out, Sir."

The Captain glanced up from the turn of his feet, gave a snort and a whistle, such as like the catcall heard from the gallop.

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theatre, took a goodly pinch from his mull, sheathed his sword, and obeyed the orders of the inferior in military grade.

"Singular man," said he, as he turned about and regarded the youth who thus took upon himself the command. "Singular man, whew!" continued he, with another sharp whistle.—"Singular man. But devilish clever fellow. Whew! Subaltern of my company; command a brigade that chap."

Indeed, what with snorting, whistling, snuffing, and admiring the versatility of his officer, this eccentric and easy commander seemed to be fully employed, and quite contented to have the trouble of command taken from his shoulders. With spectacles on nose, he watched his every movement, and awaited his cue, as to what was to be the next order, with the greatest apparent interest.

We had, as I said, sat ourselves down upon the heather, and were partaking of a slight refreshment, furnished forth from the haversack carried by the servant of Ensign Altamont de Montdidier. Whilst doing so, I learned from him the circumstances which had brought his party so opportunely to this spot. "We were ordered out," said he, "some three days back, from Bræmar Castle, in order to make a

foray upon these mountains, and burn the whiskey trade. 'Harry the wives of Goodman's goods,' and give them light to see the hoods."

"For two days," continued he, "we have been on the hunt, carrying fire and sword, over rock and mountain. Turk Gregory never could do any deeds. Last night, however, 'as I understand, the advantage did remove,' half my power was nearly devoured by the unexpected flood of washes surrounded a party of the men who were under my friend M'Kilt. M'Kilt, saying, you were nearly victimized by the element you abhor. Here's to ye in health! we have captured, more to your taste, than I had! M'Kilt. This is whiskey, mon capitaine. Sergeant Cameron, Sir, serve the men their allowance of this liquor. The Captain will drink it."

"As I was telling you," continued Altamont de Montdidier, "the Captain and myself, having divided our power, I went to the mountain tops, while he trod the valleys below. If the man, as Goodman De Montdidier pounds it, go to the water and drown himself, it is, will he nill he, he goes, mark you; but if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself. Now, our

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M'Kilt hath been, (according to his own account) since he first donned the red rag, nine times across the Atlantic. He hath suffered shipwreck three several times in the Indian Ocean, and was once cast away like Robinson Crusoe on an uninhabited island. Storm and siege, and all the extremities of war hath he endured, and even borne surgery bravely. Yet, was he last night all but drowned in a puddle here. He suffered himself to be surrounded by the waters of this flood and with his men was nearly swept away. I brought him off with his drum. No matter how, here he is. My service to you, M'Kilt.

"In short, Sir, we were completely washed out of Strathdon, and the shelties which carried our camp equipage drowned. We therefore have been fain to keep higher up in our attempt at reaching the Castle of Bræmar, should it yet remain to us. The cheil, who is endeavouring to guide us safely thereto, advertised us of this bothie, and we have, as you see, surprized, captured it, and made your acquaintance. M'Kilt, my excellent friend, I think time is up. Sergeant Bendochie, order the drum to beat up, and fall in. We have a long march before us, and a flooded country; if we are to find out Bræmar, we must find it out to-night. We

have, you see," continued he, "the end of our tether. There's no more in Egypt. Our wallets are now the whiskey bottle."

The detachment, accordingly, under arms, and were told off; the drum and the skirl of the pipes was on the rushing winds; and the detachment looking amidst the majestic scenery as they marched, a mere crawling insects, wended their way toward Bræmar.

The march was not unattended with difficulties; the floods were terrific, many were lost, and much property destroyed. Altamont was, however, a young man, with many resources and perseverance; and at that spot, he was only the more enabled to achieve a passage at another. He could not have done it better; and notwithstanding the power of the elements, he carried his detachment to power without the loss of a single man to Bræmar.

The castle of Bræmar, with its towers at the angles, resembling a loop-holed wall, and its windows been carefully secured in old times with bars of iron, (crossing each other



ong, like the grates of a prison), and its High-land sentinels before the gates, was as like the castle of Darnlinvarach, in the legend of Monrose, as one pea is like unto another.

Since the rebellion of '45 (as far as I could learn) it had not been used for the reception of men of war, until the present detachment some few months before, was ordered there for the purpose of aiding the civil power in the prevention of illicit whiskey brewing. It was a vast, cold, tombstone-looking building, appearing, as you gazed upon it from the hills around, like some huge mausoleum erected in the pass. Its principal apartment was large; and having only the simple appointments of a small barrack-room, namely, two chairs and one table, placed in the midst before the huge cavernous chimney, it had a most chilly and comfortless appearance. Ensign Altamont de Montdidier had, however, partially rendered it more habitable, with the only means in his power; for he had pitched a tent in its centre, beneath whose protecting canvass the furious winds, which blew around the apartment, were not much more felt by the occupiers, than if they had tenanted a windmill.

It was in the night when we at length reached the castle. Jaded and spent with toil, the detachment was glad to gain its shelter,

since the fury of the elements among something dreadful to encounter on the whilst the terrific deluge, which was through the region, filled the minds with feelings of awe and dread. Even between our stronghold and the sea either blown up, or washed into the waters; and many thought the last arrived. Buildings were levelled, cottages ried away, enormous trees uprooted, and many poor peasants drowned in their friends, who could render them any assistance. And still, the waters were on the

Meanwhile Altamont, M'Kilt, and I sat ourselves before the roaring fire, in an apartment which had been appropriated as a mess-room in this Highland castle; and the villanous compound of horrible which whistled, shrieked, and bellowed in the air without, we held converse, smoked our havannahs, and quaffed potations of toddy.

The scene was altogether new to me, and unamusing. A huge log of pine, big as for the yule log on a Christmas Eve, the olden time, blazed before us, giving a degree of comfort within; whilst all the terrible sounded in the forest without.

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The winds, indeed, sounded like the continuous rush of some mighty cataract; the waters of the foaming Dee formed a roaring second; the chimney piped and groaned in concert. Lamentations and strange screams of death were heard in the air; and the sentinels calling to each other "with dire yell," and naming the progress of the night every quarter of an hour, added to the discord.

Two more extraordinary beings than the companions I had thus fallen in with, it would have been difficult to have found, I should think. The one, all fire, spirit, and liveliness; the other, as slow, quizzical, and torpid.

Altamont, on doffing his regimentals, in order to take his ease after the march, had thrown on an elaborately embroidered and spangled tunic, which had served him to play the part of the haughty, gallant, gay Lothario, during some recent private theatricals in the last quarters they had come from; consequently he looked, as he sat imbibing his whiskey-punch beneath the ample chimney-piece, a sort of Sir Percy Shafton. M'Kilt, on the contrary, with a red night-cap on his head, an old and long-skirted morning-gown upon his body, and spectacles on nose, looked more like the spectre of some withered alchemist of old, than a man

of this world. Two persons, in opposite in disposition, perhaps new together ; yet, strange to say, degree of friendship for each other seldom experienced amongst the blade.

They were both as in their outwardly to be misconceived as they were in their nature. " Altamont, by his conduct would have proclaimed himself a centric fop:—there was a levity in his pleasure to indulge, which made him be regarded, that what he said and heeded nor thought of but as the deed of a trifling person. With all this, ever, there was an under-current if he was master of everything, he observed things at a glance through the designs of others and was in fact an exceedingly shrewd and yet, although you lived under his roof with him for a twelvemonth, chose it you would have failed to find him out. He made himself enemies of all who went—that delighted him ; and was every man's friend at heart, and scorn to the world. " Society," he said, " is poisonous, even in its smallest

refully, most scrupulously, selected ;" and  
t, when an actor in the gay and festive scene,  
was delightful to be within the scope of his  
yous influence. Conscious of his superiority  
er the generality of his fellow mortals, he  
as the last to presume upon it, or be dissatis-  
d with the companionship he happened to be  
rown amongst, and he could have extracted  
nusement and instruction for the passing hour  
the company of the veriest clodpole of the  
illage.

M'Kilt again, although in his withered and wild  
tire, " he scarce looked an inhabitant of the  
rth," was a most estimable man, and in every  
ing a soldier and a gentleman. Beneath all  
is singularity, coldness, and quietude of man-  
er, there was a soul of great magnitude ; and  
although it took much to arouse his High-  
nd blood, when once chafed or insulted,  
othing but blood would have washed out the  
ound.

After the fatigues of our march, and the  
orm we had encountered, the port we had  
eached seemed doubly pleasant. The Captain's  
ear rank serving man, moreover performing the  
ffice of cook and waiter, with the celerity and  
quietude that a soldier servant, (and a soldier

servant alone (can or will give his a having dressed us a mess of red deer boiled a kettle of water, poured a fragrant cup of tea, poached us a rooster of new laid eggs, and made a shake me beneath the tent in the centre of the regiment, we sat ourselves, as I said to the enjoyment of the hour—

The storm without might roar, and run  
We did na mind the storm a whistle.

“ When you mentioned your name Sir,” said Altamont, “ in yonder bottle so taken up with matters appertaining to action, that in truth I hardly marked during the troubles of our march though we have become most excellent have had other things to think of, enquiring into each others titles and bearings.”

I knew enough of the world to surmise the knowledge of my name and circumstances would be more likely to poison the peace of the party, than to add to our conviction had began to forget my misfortune in the enjoyment of the society of this excellent the query, however, although it “ st

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reer of laughter with a sigh, required an answer."

Altamont saw my confusion as I told it, and an instant knew the circumstances of my recent trial. His superciliousness of manner immediately left him, and he redoubled his attention and kindness to me; whilst M'Kilt, who was also, in so much master of my story as the recent proceedings of the court martial had published to the world, in his awkward and ungainly manner, likewise overwhelmed me with civility. It was enough that I was unfortunate with these men: not place or greatness, or any power upon earth would have made them offer me the most trifling slight or affront when once they had become acquainted with my story.

"Fie, what a night is this!" said Altamont, rising, and walking to the window. "The genius of the storm rides on the posting winds; both current and ripple are dancing in light here. The castle is completely surrounded by water, M'Kilt, we're like a colony of beavers in their lodge: *ergo* we shall be drowned."

M'Kilt whistled, rose from his seat, and walked to the window. The moon gave a dubious light, and all around looked like the sea.

"Five, Sir," said the Sergeant.

"It's time the *réveille* sounded, then," said the officer; "and there it goes."

Accordingly the loud beat of an unbraced sheepskin, rattling and rolling a few feet above our heads, soon drummed in the ears of the sleeping soldiery; and the heavy tread of between fifty and sixty individuals, rushing from their beds, was quickly added to the clamour.

If the reader has never heard an infantry brass drum beaten, as a British drummer can and will beat it, and that too under the same roof with himself, accompanied by the screaming skirl of a Highland bagpipe, and the piercing squeal of the wry-necked fife, he can have no conception of the sound which now disturbed "the curtained sleep" of Captain M'Kilt's power. Nothing, indeed, as I said before, interferes with the discipline of the British soldier; and the duty goes forward amidst storm and wreck, as steadily as amidst fire and siege.

Here, accordingly, cooped up in a solitary tower, cabined, confined, and surrounded by the roaring waters, the business of the day commenced with the same regularity as though



nothing extraordinary was taking place. Indeed, it was not a little edifying to contemplate that system by which men could be kept in order, and made to sit down and break their fasts at the roll of the drum, put their barrack-rooms in trim, accoutre themselves, and fall in, en-ranked along the upper apartments of a building, whose foundation and ground-floor were inundated by an encroaching flood ; their situation being like that of men wrecked upon a desert sand, who look to be washed off the next tide.

## CHAPTER II.

Hitherto, this appears to be one of the most extraordinary families that ever man of quality marched into.

Sir Tunbelly, I shall now quit thy den ; but while I retain the use of my senses, I shall ever remember thou art—a dem'd horrid savage.

## TRIP TO SCARBOROUGH.

UNDER the circumstances I have mentioned in the preceding chapter, was I first made acquainted with Captain M'Kilt, and his no less eccentric subaltern ; and such was my first night in the castle of Bræmar.

Luckily the waters, shortly after the *réveille* and turn out of the garrison, began to subside, though it was many days before we were able to set foot on the green sward upon which the building stood ; and long will it be before that flood is forgotten in the North. I spent some

weeks with my generous and kind-hearted friends, and then prepared to take leave of them. Altamont, now that the country was getting more passable, proposed to himself a short leave of absence, and invited me to accompany him on a visit he intended to make to the residence of a Scotch laird to whom he had letters of introduction. I endeavoured to excuse myself, as I felt diffident at making new acquaintances in my present situation. He, however, overruled my objections, and we agreed to undertake the expedition together.

As Rakehelly Hall was not above thirty miles from Bræmar, after taking leave of the excellent M'Kilt, we set forth with knapsacks on our backs, containing a change of clothing, early one morning, to reach it on foot.

The roads, in the direction we traversed, were in many places so completely destroyed by the recent floods, that they looked like deep trenches, scooped out by an invading army; whilst, on every side, was to be observed devastation and ruin amidst the slimy deposit of the subsiding tide.

We reached the woods of Rakehelly late at night; just, indeed, as the Laird and his friends were beginning the diversions and revels it was their humour to indulge in. The house was a

castellated mansion, apparently, as we looked at it from the distant hill, rearing its white turrets from the midst of a hanging forest of enormous pines ; though in reality it stood in the midst of an open park of some extent, filled with deer.

It was one of those lovely spots, to look on which, necessarily takes the imagination of the gazer back to more romantic and stirring days. As the blue smoke ascended above the tops of the forest trees, and the turrets, silvered in the moonlight and embosomed in the massive wood, met our admiring gaze, we stopped to think upon some of the deeds of gallantry which the legendary lore of the neighbourhood attached to the family of the chieftain who owned the estate.

The sharp and continued report of fire-arms was distinctly heard as we stood upon the hill-top and contemplated the house.

“ The muckle Laird of Rakehelly is an eccentric and half-crazy being, I have heard,” said Altamont. “ Indeed, I have been repeatedly warned against this visit we are making, as he is at times said to be almost dangerous in his liveliness of disposition. A sort of fellow who stands to no repairs. He turns night into day, too ; rising with the owl, and going to bed with

the lark. Can he be indulging in the sports of the field, like the wild huntsman in *Der Frieschutz*? *N'importe*, we shall soon see."

Accordingly we descended the hills we were upon, and diving into the thick pine forest at its base, after a couple of miles, gained the park, ascended another mile of wood, and entered the opening in front of the house.

A mound was thrown up before the large bay-window of the parlour, which, although we saw a glare of light beyond, hindered us from observing the employment of the persons whose repeated shots were evidently proceeding from within the apartment.

Warned by one or two bullets whistling past our ears, we stopped, and making a *détour*, reached the stone steps which led to the fore door of the mansion. Here we were met by several keepers with torches in hand, who, on Altamont announcing his name, ushered him into the dining-room amidst the assembled party, who were just at that moment recreating themselves after breakfast in their own peculiar fashion.

I was considerably struck by the oddness of the scene. A long table, covered with the remains of this midnight breakfast, stood in the midst of the ample room, at which lounged

several of the guests. Others, were seated in the deep embrasure of the bay-window which looked out upon the park, and continually loaded and fired into the mound I have described. Each man blazing away at his own target, above and around which were suspended various lighted lanthorns.

It was, indeed, a curious party, but the host beat them all hollow both in appearance and style. He sat upon a raised seat at the head of his table, on which, as I said, the breakfast equipage still remained, mixed up with pistols, rifles, fowling-pieces, powder-flasks, bullets, and other matters appertaining. Wine there was, too, of every description, from sparkling hock to imperial tokay, together with spirits of all sorts, liqueurs, and a case of cigars standing on one side of the room, big as a seaman's chest.

The host was a short, thin, weasel-faced man, with pointed features, a red shock head of hair, a little cane-coloured beard, and a laughing, mischievous, restless eye. So fidgetty was he withal, that he could scarcely sit still for a moment, but kept darting about in his chair, and shifting his position, as if he was afflicted with St. Vitus's dance.

His conversation, which came by fits and starts, was accompanied by a solitary laugh,

which preceded and ended every thing he said and did, and was quite startling at times. For instance, if he darted suddenly forward and helped himself but to the "rough, tough leg of an old moor fowl," he always preluded the action by a joyous "ha!" And if he addressed any of the attendants or guests, he always preceded it with a loud "ho!"

It was his pleasure to be thought sometimes an Eastern sultan, sometimes a Roman emperor; on which occasions he was as magnificent in his entertainments as Mark Anthony himself. At others he professed himself a sort of high priest, and delighted in fancying his companions were a brotherhood of the same order with himself. When such ideas held him, he was not so hospitable. In fact, he was very mad at times, and exceedingly dangerous, when not in a pleasant temper.

His amusement was to help load the pistols with which his friends fired, and hold the stakes, and occasionally as he sat, to let fly at any object on the walls of the room that hit his fancy at the moment. Consequently the portraits of his ancestors and the various other paintings which adorned the apartment, were riddled with shot, and every part of the walls and ceiling filled with bullet marks, as closely as the walls of the

birth-place of Shakspeare, at Stratford-upon-Avon, is with the names of the pilgrims who have visited his shrine.

“Ho!” shouted the host, with a loud and startling effort, pointing his withering forefinger at Altamont the moment he entered. “Ho! who the deuce are you?”

“Mind what you are at here,” said Altamont aside to me, “or you’ll get an accidental bullet through your brain. The thing has happened before to-night. Most high, most mighty, and most puissant Cæsar,” he continued, doffing his bonnet, and walking up to the Laird, “I bear a sealed brief from your ally, Lord Cœur de Lion. A missive of introduction to your court here:—peruse the firman, Eccellenza.”

“Ha!” said the Laird, poisoning the pistol he had just loaded in his right hand, and biting the tip of the forefinger of his left, as his rolling eye glanced from Altamont to myself, in a sort of insane doubt as to what we really were, and what we really wanted in his hall of state; for having been twice put into confinement, he was extremely jealous of strangers mixing amongst his party, or entering his house, and the chances were, if he suspected us as inquisitors, he would be likely to give us the benefit of his weapon.



“Ha!” said he, after seizing the letter Altamont offered him, throwing it upon the table, and putting his elbow upon it, whilst he leaned forward and gazed intently from one to the other. “Lord Cœur de Lion,” said ye, “good. Fraternal friends and holy brothers,” he continued, calling to the sporting gentlemen assembled, and who were all apparently as mad as himself, “draw to the table here, and fill a chalice for the nonce. A welcome to my new friends here. Gentlemen, you’re both welcome in a loving cup, Here’s dirt and ashes, mortality, misery, and vicissitude to us all.”

After drinking this toast, the glasses were all dashed over head, and the pistollers returning to their vocation, the match, (which was for a large amount), proceeded; and blaze away over the bridge, was all the rage for the next two hours at least.

The assemblage were, as I said, for the most part men of habits as eccentric as the host himself, men who, in lending themselves to his humours during their visit at Inchkeithing, and following his insane and reckless style, in some sort followed the bent of their own inclinations. They occasionally called themselves the Infernals, and constituted a sort of club, which met once a

year at the Hall of Rakehelly ; the Laird whereof was perpetual head-sinner, chief devil, or master of the revels ; and it being a case of follow-my-leader whilst the meeting lasted, their freaks, and hare-brained deeds, were the astonishment of the whole country side. The club consisted of twenty members, all out-and-out devils, and there was no allowance of adding to their number ; neither could any persons be admitted to their society, except through the introduction of one of themselves. Indeed, they had played some rather queer and rough jokes upon one or two persons who had sought to mingle in their exclusive society.

About a dozen out-and-outs were at present at this gathering. Some of them were Scotchmen, one or two Irish, and some Englishmen. A hare-brained and reckless brotherhood, although gentlemanly in style and manner, as a matter of course—being all of them of the higher class of society ; only, perhaps, somewhat too boisterous, all of them having rather more brandy than brains in their heads at the present moment. Gamesters they were, because that is the varnish of a complete man of the world ; and philosophers they professed themselves, because they doffed the world aside, and bid it pass—taking no heed of time but by its loss.

Their substitution of the night for the day was the least of their eccentricities, that being frequently done by the fashionable world, during a London season. These worthies, however, professed to enjoy the sports of the field during Phœbe's reign, with more zest than they could whilst bright Phœbus glared upon their deeds. The Laird himself, who had, as I said, been twice confined in an asylum, had done so indeed for years ; and the meeting of the society only lasting for six weeks, the members were content for that time to make the exchange in order to meet his taste.

At the present time then the sweepstakes having been decided, the party proceeded to follow their diversions according to the rules and regulations of their host. They were allowed one hour's rattling of the bones, stakes *ad libitum*, only they must be held by the Laird.

Next came, moon permitting, a horse-race, there being a regular race-course in the park. Then came the principal meal, served in the great hall at two o'clock in feudal style, the principal personages sitting according to their rank, and the retainers at a lower board. After this, otter-hunting, salmon-spearing, rabbit-shooting, together with whatever diversions suited the

weather and the season, were followed up until supper was served about day-break.

Such was the custom of the Friars of Inchkeithing. Their society lasted for about three years, at the end of which period, its members were for the most part *hors de combat*. Two out of the number were shot by members of the fraternity, dying the death of fat bucks upon the moonlit glade, double that number drank themselves to death, two more broke their necks at steeple-chase, and the remainder, on the death of their grand master, dissolved of their own accord, and became victims of "Cupid's but-shaft," married, and were consequently (like the rest) settled.

To return, however, to the present diversions, a horse-race was the first thing in rotation. The moon shone out brightly and the whole country around was silvered in her rays. The horses were excellent, and the stakes high, each man riding his own horse in his shirt and drawers, tied round the waist with a hay-band.

Then came a regatta, with flat bottomed boats, which the opponents were to row or propel in any way they possibly could up a rapid in the River Don, which ran through Inchkeithing park. One member had already been drowned in attempting the feat, and no

man had ever yet achieved it, simply because it was impossible. After this trial, in which those who made the effort, got a good ducking for their pains, the feast was served, and the fraternal friends quaffed their potations with a devotion worthy of the monks of old; these after shouting and singing like a regular crew of bacchanals, finished their orgies by ordering their steeds to the door for a sort of midnight parade and moonlight scour over the country. Accordingly, horses being provided for Altamont and myself, the whole party mounted and set forth on a headlong expedition, in which Mandeville, the Laird, being the leader, the devil for the hindmost was the order of the course.

They soon cleared the precincts of the park, scampered through the little hamlet, frightening the inhabitants from their sleep, and the whole village from its propriety by their shrieks and bacchanalian outcries. They then galloped through the pine forest beyond, and racing over the waste moorland, held onwards towards the hills. O'er rough and smooth they galloped on in wild career. Now their horses' hoofs struck fire from the beaten flint, as they clattered over some old half-paved road which, made in old times, led to a ruinous Tam O'Shanter-like

bridge, situate in the lonely pass, and long unused and unknown to all but the shepherd. Then again, dashing through the streamlet, like John Gilpin through the Wash at Edmonton, they continued the race. The ptarmigan whirred from under their horses' feet as they galloped across the heath, like a band of accursed Siouxs in the prairie, and the wild-fowl screamed as they floundered around through the moss, and gaining the lone mountain side, spurred furiously up the ascent.

After galloping along the hill tops, to some distance, they at length drew bridle, and leaping from their panting steeds, picketed them, and throwing themselves upon the heather beside a mountain rivulet, watched for the first streaks of dawn. Here they cooled their flasks in the streamlet, and refreshed themselves with a draught of full proof, as they lay along beside the burn; as soon as the dawn appeared, they once more mounted, formed in a line upon its ridge, and commenced a steeple-chase home again, in comparison with which, all the races of the sort that ever were run, were I should think but flat and stale.

By miracle, all the party in this instance at some time or other, during the next day, got safe home; but half their horses were

totally ruined. Two had their backs broken, and two more were like Fitzjames's steed, left amongst the crags as food for the Highland eagle.

Altamont and myself managed to reach Rakehelly Hall soon after Mandeville, who was first, and half-a-dozen of his companions, when we partook of supper at day-break; and having seen enough of their eccentricities, when the host retired to his couch to sleep off the fatigues of his midnight revel, we took our leave, and wended our way towards the south.

It was a lovely morning when we left Rakehelly House, and clearing the park, we took our way towards the main road, which we expected to find after holding the by-path we traversed for about six or seven miles. The broken track which we pursued possessed the highest charm for the traveller. In some places it was shadowed by huge oaks and birches, and in others, we passed through narrow defiles, overhung by frowning rocks on either hand. Then again we traversed the pebbly margin of a lovely lake, and after that, the long track was lost before us in an immeasurable looking wild, arrayed in heath of the darkest purple.

It was delightful to travel in the companion-

ship of so agreeable a companion as my new friend. We were in the land of romance; and having been for some time stationed in the Highlands, he knew the neighbourhood well.

Nor rock nor glen we paced along,  
But had its legend and its song.

When we reached the main road, our destinations necessarily lay in different directions. He was due at his detachment, and it would need his utmost speed of walking, if he meant to reach it before nightfall. My destination it would have been more difficult to decide upon at that moment, but I professed an urgent desire to reach the gude town of Aberdeen, some seventy miles southward from where we then were.

Altamont tried all his powers of persuasion to induce me to return with him and remain longer at Bræmar; but I felt unwilling to do so, and determined to box the road, and take my chance towards the south. I felt a secret longing to be alone, and ponder upon my situation, and consider what was the best course for me to pursue. Relatives I had none that I knew much of, or cared for; certainly, none who felt the most remote interest in my fate. My thoughts still harped, however, upon my father.



I felt a great desire to hear something of him, although I resolved to starve and die piecemeal, rather than ask assistance from him, after his unkind behaviour. England seemed to be, therefore, my most proper destination, and I resolved to reach it, as soon as I conveniently could. For the first time in my life, I felt the value of money; and the poor hundred pounds I carried in my pocket, I wisely considered my only earthly friend.

## CHAPTER III.

What, what, what? ill luck, ill luck?

Why, thou loss upon loss! The thief gone with so much, and so much to find the thief; and no satisfaction, no revenge: nor no ill luck stirring, but what lights o' my shoulders.

SHAKSPERE.

"FAREWELL, then," said Altamont; "since you will no longer sojourn pleasantly amongst the green retreats of Bræmar with us, and doff the world aside in the Highlands, I suppose we must part here. I shall, however, trust to meeting you in the great metropolis, when I am relieved from exile and detachment."

"It would give me more pleasure so to do," I returned, "than I shall say here, or you believe. But, indeed, I rather hope we may not do so. The best wish M'Gregor can give his friends, is that he may see them no more."

"Tush—tush!" returned Altamont. "You

look upon the dark side of things. If I was not chained down here by the articles of war, I would accompany you to England, look into your affairs for you, and spite of yourself set you right with your friends. You are a dreamer, a Jacques, a melancholy fellow. Why, man, in all you have told me, you have committed the sin of omission rather than commission. Had I been there!—but 'tis no matter. You want your grandmother to look after you. You're evidently not fit to go alone. *N'importe*: I shall be up in London soon, and I'll see you the instant I arrive, and never leave you till I have put you in a position to laugh at your enemies, and set you right with those you love."

"You will scarcely be able to accomplish that, I fear," I returned; "but only lose your own position in society in the attempt. It is one thing, Altamont, to befriend a man, and become his associate upon the misty mountain-tops, or within the walls of Bræmar; but it is another, my friend, to walk with him down St. James's Street, and cram him down the throats of your acquaintance in the great metropolis."

"And do you, then, class me amongst those insects of the season, those *figurantes* of the

ball-room, the grinning sycophants of the supper-hour, the *débris* of the season, those spiritless waterflies, who, without one attribute in nature to recommend them, gibbet themselves upon some person of rank and authority in the world, and, sunned in the eye of fashion, fear almost to walk upon their mother earth unadvisedly, lest they lose their place in the station they cling to? Dost think I fear the look of such cold shadows as these? No, my good fellow; I have said it, and I'll do the thing I promised. Be thou but guided by me, and I will bring you through your difficulties. Go according to your own headstrong ideas, and deeper ruin stares you in the face than that which you have achieved. Take my advice, return with me to Bræmar, write to your father instantly, and state your situation; by the time you get your answer, my leave of absence will have arrived. 'Yes, I'll be your friend, Laertes.' We will go across the Channel together, and carry dismay and confusion amongst these infidel Jews and turban'd Turks, that have so woefully bedevil'd your fortune and good name."

It was in vain Altamont endeavoured to persuade me to return with him. I felt even his

society irksome to me ; and promising to write my address in London, we parted.

Those who have never wandered upon the mountains in Scotland, and visited these lonely habitations, far out of the reach of the mere traveller, can have no idea of the solitude and beauty of their situation. The glen I had traversed for some miles, realized Scott's description of Glendear'd ; and when, on turning the base of the dark hill, the little habitation appeared far away in the distance before me, the streamlet running beneath the green hillock it was erected upon, with the mountains piled in awful grandeur all around, I almost expected to see Dame Glendinning herself come forward to welcome me.

The sun was setting as I reached the cottage, and I paused to observe the beauty of the lone and somewhat desolate spot in which it stood. It was precisely one of those out-of-the-way residences, where, in days of strife and fierce contention, a proscribed or outlawed chieftain, or knot of prick-eared whigs might have lain concealed from the pursuit of their savage foes. It had but barely escaped the destruction so many cottages thus situate had met with during the recent floods ; for the ascent it stood on was

in some parts completely undermined by the sweeping torrent, whilst many of the little cultivated patches, where the water had passed over them, were devastated and covered with torn-up heather, roots of trees, mud and slime.

Finding no one to greet me without, I passed through the little kail yard, and entered the cottage. The peat reek was welcome to my nostrils, as it spoke of rest and refreshment, and in truth I needed both after my somewhat toilsome walk. I found no one, however, within the cottage, but an elderly female, who was spinning and singing beside the turf fire. Being somewhat deaf, at first she did not recognise me, and I stopped to listen to her ditty; it was old and plain, reminding me of the clown's song in "Twelfth Night," which,

The spinsters, and the knitters in the sun,  
Did use to chaunt. 'Twas silly sooth,  
And dallied with the innocence of love  
Like the old age.

A child was sleeping in a sort of cradle by her side, and the chaunt was meant for its lullaby. The female was evidently of a great age; and her features, as I caught a glimpse of them, did not at all partake of the characteristics

of the lower order of Scotchwomen. They were small and well formed. Her complexion was dark, and of that death-like hue we sometimes see in persons of great age, whose activity and vital powers are yet unimpaired, livid looking, and speckled all over like a toad's back. A sort of hood was drawn over her grey locks : and altogether a more hideous-looking hag it had never before been my fate to encounter. The verses she sang were evidently, as I said, some nursery rhymes of the old age,

Tarry woo, tarry woo,  
Tarry woo, is all to spin ;  
Card it weel, card it weel,  
Card it weel, ere ye begin.  
When 'tis carded, row'n, and spun,  
Then the work is haffins done ;  
But when woven, drest, and clean,  
It may be cleading for a queen.\*

As I advanced further into the interior, she glanced round and saw me, and jumping up with more alacrity than from her age I should have supposed her capable of, she immediately confronted me.

She was evidently not the gude wife of the

\* Scott.

cottage, and I at first took her for one of those demented creatures, who are still to be found wandering on the Highlands, speering fortunes, and chaunting old ditties in the ingle neuk, for elemosynary scraps, and the night's lodging, which the simple cottagers would think it ill-luck to refuse them.

"Fat divil, do we want with meelitary men or guagers here," said she, quickly, as she stared into my face.

"Who told you, my good woman," said I, "that I was either the one or the other."

"Bræmar," said she, quickly. "Ye're frae Bræmer. I ken ye weel. Ye're ane of the officers. Ye've been watched' to the Hall. How came ye here, in the deil's name? Follow me out, if ye're wise."

She glided from the cottage, as another female entered from an inner apartment. I immediately altered my intention of following her, and addressed myself to this person, who I rightly concluded was the wife of the proprietor of the place. She was a sulky looking, and ill-favoured individual; and to my request for some refreshment, after telling her whither I was bound, and the long walk I had had since morning, she deigned me no other answer than that of



placing bannocks, milk, and a lump of mouldy cheese before me.

“Your miles are long, my good Madam,” said I, “and the country much cut up: I feel more fatigued than I could have imagined. Can you give me a night’s lodging, in your pleasant cottage?”

“Na,” said she, sulkily, “we’ve no that accommodation for the likes o’ ye; best gang forrets.”

“I *shall* do so, then, my good woman,” said I, “and small thanks to ye for short courtesy.”

At this moment, and as I was finishing my meal, the old daft boddie, returned, and resuming her seat, began to warble another of her ld ballads:

My cummer and I lay down to sleep,  
With twa pint stoups at our bed feet.  
And aye, when we wakened, we drank them dry,  
What think ye o’ my cummer and I?\*

She evidently wished to draw my attention towards her; for as I turned, while the ill-favoured hostess looked another way, I observed her making secret signs for me to leave the cottage. Accordingly, somewhat struck with

\* Scott.

her manner, although I had intended half an hour's rest, and (if I could have obtained accommodation), a night's lodging, I arose and offered to remunerate the crabbed landlady.

She, however, refused the coin I offered her, though something more civilly. "Hout na!" said she. "It was na worth the quarter o' that. I was quite welcome; they did na tak siller frae travellers: they seldom came that way, and when they came, her's was no inn."

As I nodded to the weird sister, in quitting the cottage, she pointed significantly, with her choppy finger, in the direction I had just traversed, as if warning me to return. I, however, paid no attention to her actions, made no further inquiry, and although, for the first few paces I thought the circumstance rather singular, and the Highland hospitality I had received somewhat constrained, I shouldered my burthen, and like Christian in the "Pilgrim's Progress," went onwards on my way. The shades of evening were now descending fast, the hills were wrapped in deeper brown, and the breeze sighed along the glen I traversed in a melancholy and dreary style, that would have been quite delightful to a lover of the wild poetry of the bard Ossian.

As the glen was thus lonely, and I had still

some five miles before I came upon any other habitable spot, I plucked a stout stake from amongst some hurdles before I quitted the precincts of the little farm. The warning action of the old woman had for the moment struck me, and I felt that something in the shape of a weapon in hand would be both companionable and perhaps useful.

The path I traversed ran along the margin of the streamlet, turning and winding between the hills; and, to my surprize, as soon as I had wound my way around the base of the first hill beyond the cottage, I found my weird and withered friend had cut nearly across it, and was in waiting before me beside the burn.

“Did I no warn ye not to tak this road?” she said, as soon as I came up. “Did I not sign to ye no to gang further up the glen?”

“And wherefore not, my good woman?” said I.

“There’s danger in your path,” she returned.

“Who will injure me?” I inquired. “Robbery is almost unknown in your country; and for myself I fear nothing. I have injured no one; why should I?”

“You have eaten of the bread, and drank of

the cup of those you have injured but now," returned the beggar.

"Whose bread have I eaten, foolish woman," I inquired, "that you can allude to?"

"Yonder woman's," returned the hag, pointing back to the cottage. "Ye have imprisoned her husband and her son with yer cursed sogering; burned their bothies, and wasted the gude liquor in the streams. Ye have clean ruined them a'tegether."

"If you allude to the capture of some smugglers upon the hills, beyond Toumantoul, I have had as much to do with that as you have. I was captured amongst the lot."

"Are ye not frae Bræmar?" said she, impatiently; "and have ye not been away at that daft Mandeville's place there in Donside? Ye ken ye have, for I saw ye at Bræmar. Gang not doun the glen," she continued; "I'se tell ye fairly, there's them been out speering for ye these twa days, that winna spare ye."

"Ridiculous!" said I; "what have I to do with the people here? I never burnt a bothie in all my life."

"A-weel, a-weel, ye mun do as ye like. Be ye ane of the garrison or not, ye're kenned and marked, and they winna be pleased to see ye

again where the still's at work, that's a'. Dinna say ye ha na been forewarned."

So saying, the old dame turned upon her heel, and returned towards the cottage.

I cannot say that I altogether relished this warning, when I came to reflect upon it as I pursued my way. It was not impossible that, from having been with Altamont and McKilt deer-shooting in the forest, I might have been recognized and identified as one of the officers. The path I pursued I knew was not many miles from the place where I had fallen in with the smugglers on the eventful morning of my meeting with McKilt and his party, and, according to the account of the old hag I had just left, the leader of the crew had dwelt in the cottage where I had stopped. I was not deceived. The moon had risen whilst I mended my pace, grasped my hedge-stake, and pondered over these matters. My way still lay along the side of the streamlet, which had now become much shallower and wider, its pebbly bottom not a foot from the surface. Both current and ripple were dancing in light. A rustic bridge had been here erected, but was now broken, nothing but the piles here and there remaining to tell of its sometime whereabouts.

Somewhere about a mile from these fragments, I had been directed by Altamont to bear off to the right ; and a mile further he told me would bring me to a small public-house, where I might obtain a bed for the night.

I began to congratulate myself upon the near termination of my journey, when, on casually turning my head, I found myself followed by three men, who, at the distance of about a quarter of a mile, were hastening along the path I had traversed. From their manner, I instantly knew they were in pursuit. They were running when I first saw them, but broke into a walk as soon as they saw me stop and regard them.

The only chance left me was to push on, and, actually running, I walked on as fast as I possibly could.

The rivulet again narrowed, and ran between precipitous banks, the path ascending on the right hand bank. As I hastened up it, a slight turn for the moment hid them from my view, and I was beginning to deliberate with myself whether there would be any degradation in trusting to my heels, three to one being great odds, when I found the path in front also occupied ; two men quietly stepping from the rocky ascent

which overhung it, and standing not twenty yards before me.

There was small time for deliberation, and a hundred years of thought would only have brought me to the conclusion I arrived at the moment I caught sight of them. Whether I escaped or not, my only chance was to charge the opposing force.

Grasping, therefore, my weapon, I walked quickly towards them. I had been forewarned, and I determined to hold no parley ; but, without waiting for their attack, dash upon them, and try to escape. There was indeed nothing else for it ; the precipitous banks being on one hand, and the rivulet, at this part both deep and rapid, on the other.

The demeanour of the two ruffians in my path was sufficient to advertise me, had I not suspected it, that they meant mischief. They stood doggedly before me, so that I could not possibly get past. Each man had a stout cudgel. I walked steadily on till I came within about six yards, and then, taking the heel of my hedge-stake into the palm of my right hand, and grasping it as a soldier holds his musket and fixed bayonet in my left, I sprung upon the fellow more immediately opposing me, and driving the

point into the pit of his stomach with considerable force, he was *hors de combat* before he could effectually strike a blow. Both, however, had levelled tremendous blows as I dashed at them, but my activity had thus been the means of my eluding their cudgels, and I instantly turned upon the remaining ruffian.

He was a sturdy fellow, and dealt his blows like an Irishman at a fair. My blood was however, now up, and I dashed at him, without regard to his strength or prowess, raining such a shower upon his head, and giving point with so much effect once or twice full in his teeth, that I was just upon the point of driving him backwards into the stream, when (in my fury having totally forgotten my enemies in the rear), I was felled to the earth by a heavy blow upon the back of my head, which, but for my hat, would have perhaps killed me upon the spot.

I was, however, only stunned for the moment, and, conscious that I was now completely in the power of my enemies, I had the sense to remain perfectly quiet whilst they ransacked my pockets, and possessed themselves of my pocket-book, containing nearly all I possessed in the world—my poor hundred pounds.



As soon as they found it, three out of the four arose from their stooping posture, and examined its contents.

“Curse the fellow!” said the man whose comrade I had floored, “he has fairly done for Murdoch I think; the poor chap’s bleeding from the mouth and nose like a pig.”

“We’ve fairly stunned the cheil, however,” said another fellow, whose knee was upon my breast. “Best toss him into the burn before he comes to; he’ll sink like a stane.”

“Na, na, that winna do ava,” returned the other; “that might tell tales of us. Draw yer knife, mon, across his weasand, and then we can tak the loon doun to the bothie, and bury him.”

I turned sick at the words. To die (as Eugene Aram says) is natural and necessary; but the manner of it is something which should be decent and manly. To be slaughtered thus like a calf by these butchers, was any thing but pleasant, and I resolved to demur, and resist the application of the knife to my carotid by every means in my power. Four to one was great odds, however. On my legs I could have been content to fight like Macbeth, “till from my bones the flesh was hacked,” but to be held

down, like a pig upon a shutter, and feel the sharp knife cut through my windpipe, was horrible to contemplate.

Three of the fellows were still engaged hunting amongst the pockets of my book. The ripple of the stream sounded just beneath the bank I lay on, and a sudden thought struck through my brain.

The villain who mounted guard over me relaxed his hold for one moment, as he searched his pocket for the knife which was to cut my thread of life, and kill me like a calf. With a sudden and violent effort, I wrenched myself free from him, and rolling rapidly over before he recovered himself, in the next instant I dropped like a water-rat into the stream.

No shipwrecked mariner ever felt the grateful and cooling freshes of the desert, more welcome to his throat, than I felt the cold waters over my body as I plunged into this burn ; and allowing myself to sink several feet, I struck out like an otter, for some distance, beneath the stream.

When I rose to the surface, I found my pursuers were as cunning as myself ; they were quite awake to the habits of the animal I have mentioned, and knowing, that if I could swim,

I must soon rise for air, had run along with the current, and instantly saw me when I reached the surface. It was lucky for me that I was an expert swimmer, as I found I should have a hard struggle for it, if I meant to escape being murdered in mistake.

In my boyhood I had practised diving and swimming under water in the different streams situate near the Grange, and I was, therefore, quite at home in the element ; and as soon as I heard the shout which my pursuers gave from the bank, I again allowed myself to sink.

This time, however, I altered my game, and instead of swimming with the stream, I turned beneath the surface, and although I could not stem the swift current, like a trout or a salmon, I kept my head against it, and pulled with might and main, with a half turn, towards the further bank.

The half minute's breath I had taken, had not only shewed me that destruction awaited me from my foes, but I distinctly heard the roar of a torrent right a head, which, together with the rush of the waters which hurried me on, made me conjecture that there was in all probability, either a small cataract near, or some

rapids must be at hand. As a last resource, I therefore made for the opposite bank, and completely hidden in its dark overhanging shade, grasping a tuft with one hand, to keep my head above the water, thus out of the face of the current, lay perdue, like a North American savage, listening to the retreating footsteps of his foes.

I found, however, this was a situation I could not long endure. The cold was too great for one not bred in the woods and prairies, and I felt completely numbed. To add to my discomfiture, I found it impossible to land, the water being too deep, and nothing to obtain a grasp of on the bank sufficiently firm to haul myself up on dry land. My only chance, therefore, was to cross, and run the risk of capture. To deliberate, was to drown; I was becoming more benumbed and exhausted every instant, and letting go my precarious hold, I struck out as strongly as I was now able.

Luckily the rivulet, instead of being in deep pools, as on the side I had quitted, was just at this part gravelly and shelving, and I was enabled, with some little effort, at last to get footing upon dry land.

It is not often the case in the moral North, (in these latter days) that a traveller falls into an ambuscade, and is nearly victimized by such a relentless lot as I was endeavouring to escape from. Scotland is for the most part a quiet land; its remotest lakes, its thicket forests, its mountains and its glens, as safe and secure for the exploration of the stranger, as Hyde Park on a Sunday. In ould Ireland, indeed, it is more common for a red-coat to fall in with fellows who bear the gallows in their features, and murder in their right hands. It was, therefore, my peculiar luck to be thus hunted like a beast of prey, and it jumped I considered, with the evil fate my destiny always had in store for me.

There were, however, these peculiar features in the case, that these men had been much enraged by the powerful interference of the two detachments lying at Bræmar and Corgarff, which had most completely ruined their trade; and, as they considered, in the most unwarrantable manner robbed them of their subsistence. They had, therefore, with the less remorse appropriated my purse, and sought to take revenge upon my person.

As soon as I reached the dry land, I cautiously

looked about me ; first I thought of climbing the craggy banks which overhung the path, and gaining the hill, attempt to reach Aberlochie, which I knew was not now very far from me.

As I stooped and listened, however, I caught sight of the lurid glare of a fire, reflected in the water, not many yards from me. I knew instantly that it proceeded from a whiskey bothie, which in my progress down the stream I had passed. With stealthy pace, and so quietly that the blind mole could scarcely have heard my footfall, I approached it, and cautiously looked in. It was empty, and I entered. There were several tattered garments lying about, and hastily stripping off my coat and waistcoat, I made free with one of the ragged great coats I found lying on the floor. This is the great secret in regard to saving oneself from taking cold, after becoming wet through either from rain or immersion in water ; namely to put on a dry garment over the wet one and immediately exercise the body.

Stepping to the door, I again listened, but no sound met my ear. The smugglers were in possession of the path before me, and which, unless I could have landed on the other side the stream, or consented to return the way

I came, was the only one I could take, the river being as I said on one side, and the steep craigs on the other.

I was fully resolved not to return; and to fight my way through my opponents, was rather too hazardous. The ruffians evidently thought I should make some effort to land, before I reached the falls. There were several shelving parts of the ascending rocks I had observed, as I cautiously approached the bothie. I resolved to chance concealment, by clambering up one of these, and lie perdue, till the smugglers returned; and not to lose time, I resolved myself to recall them.

Seizing, therefore, a large piece of glowing turf, I threw it into the dry thatch of the bothie, and set it on fire; it was a sort of retaliation which exceedingly pleased me. Then grasping a stout cudgel, which I found lying near, I ran several paces towards the falls, jumped up the ascent, and effectually concealed myself.

The stratagem answered; the bothie sent up a glowing blaze, the whiskey taking fire, and I lay in breathless expectation of the result.

The smugglers soon saw the beacon, hastened

back, passed the spot in which I lay concealed, and with horrible imprecations upon me, rushed onwards, supposing that I had fled the way I came.

After listening for a few minutes to their retiring footsteps, I seized the opportunity of escape, and leaping down the rocks, with might and main I fled.

Knowing that the lone inn or public, which Altamont had described to me, was in the highway which intersected the footpath I traversed, I quickly passed the salmon leap, in the falls; and now, not thinking my dignity at all compromised after this bad action, by taking to my heels, continued to speed onwards till I reached the high road.

After I had gained about half a mile further I stopped for a moment to look back, and listen if there was any sound of my pursuers. All, however, was silent; a dancing light shot up ever and anon in the direction of the burning bothie, and beyond that, far away in the distance, was King Richard's bright track yet visible upon the horizon, which "gives token of the goodly day to-morrow."

I was now warm and vigorous; the plunge into the river had, together with the excitement



consequent upon my adventure, carried off all my previous fatigue. I was once more solitary upon the moors; but my heart was light to what it had been upon former occasions. I had fought, and all but conquered, and it is wonderful upon what good terms a man feels with himself after doing his devoir like a true knight. Making, therefore, my cudgel play around my head, I hurried forward, and before long a twinkling light threw its beams from afar. Praying heaven that it might not be an "*ignis fatuus*, or a ball of wildfire," I made towards it with might and main, and in a few minutes more I had won the lone public-house.

After battering at the door with as much vigour as the Black Knight at the Hermitage of the Clerk of Copmanhurst, I succeeded in arousing the old people who tenanted it, and, after some difficulty, gained admittance.

It was but a poor place of refuge I found; for except some eggs, coarse cheese, and marvelously stale oaten cake, this house of entertainment was all unprovided with viands for the traveller's use. The reason was plain, it was seldom, if ever, visited. The landlord and his auld wife were superannuated, and past work. I, however, was glad of the slight shel-

ter it afforded; and making the outlets as secure as I could, in case my pursuers should discover my place of refuge, and possessing myself of an old rusty fowling-piece, which had apparently graced the walls for half a century, I felt myself tolerably secure, and determined to rest here till dawn, and then put on with all convenient speed.

Making, therefore, a good turf fire, I set myself down to such viands as my host put before me, and then threw myself back in my chair, and, between sleeping and waking, pondered over my situation. With my pocket-book and its contents, all my present store was gone, except some half a dozen shillings I carried in my waistcoat pocket, and my watch. I, therefore, made up my mind to push on for Aberdeen, as well for the purpose of giving information of the robbery to the police there, as also that I might find the few effects I had directed my servant to send from Fort George, and on which, trifling as they were, I was now to depend for support till I could get a supply.

I was now, indeed, in a different situation to any I had ever before been in. Hitherto I had only had those disagreeables to encounter incident to personages moving in the higher sphere of life.

Gold, the pale and common drudge “ ’twixt man and man,” I had never contemplated the want of ; my means had always been ample for my wants, as far as subsistence went. There were circumstances, also, which had made application for money from my father’s agent, extremely unpleasant to me ; and the last time I had applied, I had been given to understand that my demands in future were not likely to be honoured.

The fact, therefore, of my becoming suddenly a penniless wanderer in the open world, was sufficiently startling, and stared me in the face, as if the poor hundred pounds I had just been robbed of, had been as inexhaustible as the cap of Fortunatus.

Thank heaven, however, that buoyancy of spirit which enabled me to surmount all the ills my particular person has been heir to, enabled me to rise above the present ill fortune.

“ What am I,” said I, “ that I should repine at that which my own rashness of temper has brought upon me ? Hitherto I have ranked myself above those with whom my lot has been cast on account of my gentility. I brought myself into difficulties with my comrades of the 145th, by holding them cheap, and estimating

myself beyond price, *ergo*, I have been humbled, fallen (I fear) like Lucifer, never to rise again. Away, then, with my gentility," said I, "there is no sign left to shew the world I am a gentleman." My name, which had been a knightly and a noble one since my fathers helped to conquer for the Normans, I determined to part with. Through me it had suffered no dishonour; but I seemed now unworthy to bear it. The station in life to which it had pleased heaven to call me, I was unable to fill. Be it so, nature hath given me talents, I will use them. The only difficulty was to know what I was most clever in. Having been brought up to no profession, the chances were, that I was unfit for any. All the accomplishments I possessed were utterly useless—not one of them would earn me a shilling. "What, in the name of all the gods at once, is to become of me?" said I. Divested by a multitude of rash acts, of home, friends, and country, unless I could manage to strike out some means of present subsistence, I must either rob or starve.

"Poor is the friendless master of a world," saith the poet. I was not master of a world, but I was both poor and friendless. At least, it was my pleasure to revel in the idea, that

such was the fact. Mine was a case of pride apeing humility ; and I cast from my mind as offensive the idea of applying to any one for assistance in my present strait. Altamont would have flown to me had I but hinted my mishap. So would M'Kilt. I was not without friends, then ; but how could I, however, borrow without the slightest idea when I was likely to be able to repay them. Mrs. Allworthy, too, good soul, if alive, would I was sure have received me into her house, and advised with me as to my future career. But, no : I resolved to work for bread, rather than be under obligation to living mortal. "No," said I, rising and striding across the floor of the little cabin I was cribbed in ; "the world hath used me scurvily. I'll seek for favours from none. To receive them would be bad enough ; but to be refused, ye gods ! I know not whether the thought most frightens, disgusts, or affronts me. Better beg my food," I said aloud, throwing myself into an Orlando Furioso attitude, which caused the old host to poke his head from his berth, and stare with affright, thinking he had a daft body for his guest ;

Or, with a base and bolsterous sword, enforce  
A thievish living on the common road.

“Ha! a thought strikes me,” I continued; “by this penniless pocket, ’twere not the worst way. I’ll turn actor for the nonce; and fret my hour upon the stage. As honest Bardolph says, ‘It is a life I do desire: I will thrive.’”

I think it is my Lord Burlington who, in one of his letters to Pope, remarks upon the amusement afforded him in observing the disparity of men from themselves, even in a week’s progress of time. The desultory leaping and catching of new motions, new modes, new measures; and that strange spirit of life (I use his own words) with which men broken and disappointed resume their hopes, their solicitations, their ambitions.

It is even so: seated in a mud-walled cottage, and almost penniless, I already began in anticipation to fancy myself the observed of all observers: a very Roscius in Rome. The scenic hour had always been to me one of peculiar enchantment. The veriest strollers that ever ranted in a booth, I had always envied their hour before the footlights; the idea, therefore, was the more pleasant to me, as it promised to afford me a visible means of existence, and jumped with my humour. Oh! Shakspeare, I fear me you have much to answer for. How many a gawky youth, who might have done his

country service at the plough-tail, have thy words of fire sent to rave, recite, and throw his awkward limbs about, and be hissed into madness in a country barn.

As soon as dawn appeared, I prepared to leave the little inn. The hostess crept from out of her berth, and prepared me a mess which she called sowans; and the old hen having deposited an egg, I made a tolerable breakfast. After remunerating the old dame, I grasped my cudgel, and wended my way.

Luckily for me, my foes had spent so much time in seeking for me in the neighbourhood of the farm in the glen, that they thought it unsafe longer to remain near the scene of their robbery; they therefore made the best of their way to Glasgow, as I afterwards heard; whilst I, unmolested, wended on towards Aberdeen, which place I reached late the next night.

## CHAPTER IV.

A poor player,  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,  
And then is heard no more.

How will this grieve you  
When you shall come to clearer knowledge, that  
You thus have published me? Gentle, my Lord,  
You scarce can right me thoroughly, then, to say  
You did mistake.

SHAKESPEARE.

WHEN I reached Aberdeen, I inquired my way to M'Cray's hotel, where I had ordered my late rear-rank servant, of the 145th, to forward my baggage to, and which I was glad enough to find the faithful fellow had performed. I forthwith located myself there; and for the first time for many nights enjoyed a comfortable bed and refreshing sleep.

It was nigh noon the next day, before I made my appearance in all the comforts of clean linen and my best suit of mufti. As I break-



fasted, I was surprised to find what a gay place this northern town was. The fashionables were just then promenading the High Street, which was quite filled with elegantly-dressed and lovely females, attended by beaux and cavaliers as smart as themselves.

I had always thought the Scotch were grave and staid folks, both young and old, with an eye to the main chance, and as rigid in manner and conversation as a community of quakers; the old folks, like Douce Davie Deans—the young as serious as his daughter Jennie. Here, however, the nymphs and swains seemed as fresh and fair, and full of spirit, as the month of May.

As I looked from my window upon the gay scene, the depôt of the regiment stationed there came sweeping down the street, with their drums and trumpets sounding my hopes. The sight gave me a pang, as I reflected that all my hopes in that profession were gone for ever.

To my surprise, I saw Altamont de Montdidier coming full swing down the street. He seemed to know every party he met, and had something to say to each, whether he knew them or not.

“Ha! my Lord Provost,” said he, to a most

curious-looking elderly gentleman, dressed something in the style of Nicol Jarvie a venerable functionary wearing a Ramilies wig, which covered his whole forehead in front; a laced neckcloth, and carrying a most respectable cane behind his back. "Ha! my Lord Provost, what sort of rule do you keep here in this shire of yours? I have been stopped, robbed, and well nigh murdered amongst the fastnesses beyond Lochintoidar."

"Heaven be here, man," said the Provost; "ye dinna mean that; hout, but it's clear again common sense, yon. Ye're joking. Ye made the giants, and then ye killed them, eh?"

"Not I," said Altamont; "like Ensign Pattypan, I should have been stopped, robbed, and stripped, but that I luckily had fire-arms with me. I'm uneasy about a friend, from whom I parted, the same morning, and I galloped into town from Toumantoul, to ascertain if he has arrived.

"Yer a gude youth, and an extraordinar," said the Provost; "I can hear ye well spoken o' in every house I call at. 'Gad, but yer a monstrous favourite of Mistress Macmullain's. What for no come away an' dine wi' us at five, man?"

"It cannot be, Baillie; I've engaged myself

this evening to Ducrow. He professes, in his bill, to ride five horses at once. I have betted that I ride ten. All Aberdeen is coming to see it, and you must bring Mrs. Macmullain also."

"I'll surely do that. But ye're a queer chiel! something foolish in these vain matters, but a monstrous favourite o' Mistress Macmullain. Come awa, and tak yer brose wi' huz to-morrow."

"It cannot be, Baillie," said Altamont. "To-morrow I am engaged, also, at the theatre. I am going into the oven with Monsieur Chaubert the fire-eater, and his leg of mutton."

"Heaven be here! but ye're surely no blate! Yer o'er fond o' these fierce vanities," returned the Baillie, taking a huge pinch of rappee; "and here comes the bonniest lass in the hale kintra side," he continued, bowing as a party of ladies were about to pass; "the Laird o' Aberbirkfeldy's dauchter."

"Did I not dance with you in Brabant once?" said Altamont, addressing himself to one of the young ladies, a remarkably handsome and elegant creature.

"Now then," I thought, "I shall hear the northern accent rained upon this impudent

youth's head. I shall certainly now hear the Fats yer will of Lieutenant Bullyman."

I was mistaken ; the lady answered quite to the purpose, and in the same language too.

" Did I not dance with *you* at Brabant once ?" she said.

" I know you did."

" How needless was it then to ask the question."

Altamont now joined the ladies in the promenade, and was quickly out of sight.

It is not necessary to pursue any further my story during the short time I remained in the north. In fine, the good Altamont, who had indeed returned post-haste from his detachment in the desire of finding me at Aberdeen, where he hoped he might still have " the tongue of persuasion," and myself the " ears of profiting," totally failed in dissuading me from my resolution of adopting the stage for a profession, and trying my powers in the company of the first strollers with whom I should fall in. He was, as I said, himself a lover of the drama, fond of amateur performances and one of the most finished actors perhaps upon the stage. He therefore could better forgive the propensity I felt to try my hand upon the boards, although his good sense told

him that it could only lead to ruin, being adopted as much out of the spirit of opposition as any thing else.

I therefore converted the few articles I possessed of any value into cash ; and left in Altamont's hands the task of endeavouring to discover the thieves who had possessed themselves of my pocket-book and its contents. Then in order to be quite in character, I put what things I wanted by way of change into a bundle, sounded the very base string of humility by assuming the name of Mr. Peter Snooks, and started on a promenade towards England.

My journey southward was pleasant enough. I lingered and loitered, like any other dreamer, for days together beside the mouldering tower, the battered keep, and the ruined abbey. I even sometimes passed the night under the trees of the forest ; and whilst thus sequestered and alone, amused myself in melancholy musings upon the by-gone days, my own blighted hopes, and all the mishaps that had happened to me. I had still some few pounds in my pockets ; my wants were few, and I turned my steps from the direct route wherever fancy led me. A draught from the running brook served me in place of more hot and rebellious liquors ; like Boniface's ale, I merely fancied it burgundy, and it was worth

ten shillings a quart ; and whilst the fresh spring bubbled beside my napkin, and the free birds twittering and chirping, hopped from bough to bough to claim the crumbs I left for perquisites, I eat my solitary meal of bread and cheese thus “under the shade of melancholy boughs,” or in any of the cottages I happened to pass in my travels.

Thus I visited many of the places of interest mentioned in Scott’s pages, and whilst his magic spell was upon me, and I wandered amidst the hills and valleys he has immortalized, I forgot for a time the cares of my every day existence. It seemed indeed indifferent to me how I passed my time, or whither I bent my steps, provided I did but pass it in a sort of oblivion of all pertaining to self. Totally without prospect, there seemed nothing left to me but to get through existence—a dreary waste of years.

Thus I wandered through Perthshire, saw the mist upon the mountain, and heard the night-bird shriek in the country of the McGregors, wandered over the fields of Bannockburn and Flodden, and wended my way through Ettrick and Teviotdale, by

Tweed’s fair river, broad and deep,  
And Cheviot’s mountains lone.

I then passed over the wilds of Cumberland, and once more approached the more fertile country of Yorkshire.

As I was now fairly quit of my military employment, I hoped never even to see a soldier again. Indeed, the mere falling in with a recruiting party, in a small town I passed through, had brought back so many unpleasant reminiscences, that I generally avoided the most frequented road, and travelled through by-ways, and shadowy lanes, having no fixed destination, but still progressed onwards in a tortuous progress, with the great metropolis in my mind's eye as a halting-place, but with no desire to reach it.

My stock of cash, however, now ran low, and I could not live so cheaply as I managed to do in the north. Moreover, although I might sometimes throw myself upon the greensward before some cottage porch, and play with the little urchins where I purchased my homely meal, yet in England, as I was compelled generally to seek my bed at the roadside inn, my purse had diminished to the lowest ebb.

One evening as I entered a little village in Derbyshire, I perceived I man fishing. I was always fond of the sport, and the sight of a brother of the angle was sure to interest me ;

accordingly I stopped and entered into conversation with him. I found he was the manager of a company of strollers, who were travelling towards Derby. They had halted for the night, he told me, in the village ; and he had been to the Great House, the residence of Squire Wildhawk, who had given them a bespeak. They were to play in the Squire's drawing-room, before a large company of his friends. The Squire had bespoke the play himself ; he was a great lover of the immortal bard, and he desired them to play "As you like it."

"You know, Sir," said the manager, "that Jaques was a character that used to make John Philip Kemble tremble ; my heavy business gentleman is just now extremely unwell, or between ourselves, he affects it : he lies crafty sick, to-day, at the Checquers, and I must either play the part myself, or we must leave Jaques out of the piece. I am by no means up in the part, and am slow of study, and knowing not what to do, in pure melancholy and troubled brain, I have taken my rod, and come to fish."

"Make yourself quite easy, Sir, on that subject," I said, "I'll play Jaques for you."

"My dear Sir, you're surely joking," said the manager, "you're not of the profession."



"I am not," I replied, "but I'll play the character, notwithstanding."

"We play, man, this evening," returned the stroller, "in a couple of hours' time. The rehearsal's over."

"I want no rehearsal," said I, "I know every part in the play."

"This is fortunate, indeed," said the manager. "Now, Mr. Arden, I have ye; 'no more that Thane of Cawdor, that Mr. Buttenshaw, shall deceive our bosom's intent;' I discharge Mr. Buttenshaw to-morrow. A specimen, Sir, a specimen; "all the world's a stage,"—speak that speech, I pray you!"

I gave it him, with good emphasis and discretion.

"My good Sir," said he, seizing my hand, "you've been joking with me. You are from London; you belong to the profession, and you ask thirty pounds a-week."

I answered him in the negative; and added, I meant to look for an engagement.

"If my poor company will not disgrace your powers," said he, "I shall be happy to engage you."

In short, I enrolled myself in his *corps dramatique*, and made my *debut* that night in the drawing-room of Wildhawk Hall: I

played Jaques before the Squire and his party. The whole affair was not a little curious. Squire Wildhawk was a specimen of the old country squire, long since extinct, a regular roaring, blustering, drinking cavalier. He was a humourist; a would be wit; and, moreover, a great lover of the drama, considering himself no slight judge of acting. We played as they used to do in the olden time, without the aid of scenery or decorations in the dining-room, a vast oak-panelled apartment; the audience passing their remarks upon us as we appeared, and criticising us with as little mercy, as Theseus and his court criticised Bully Bottom, Peter Quince, Snout, Starveling, and Flute.

The Squire was an invalid; a fine, portly, fox-hunting, drinking, gouty, old English gentleman; and being unable to walk, he had his great chair wheeled into the room, and a table, with his punch-bowl, his port and his claret, set before him. The lights were arranged across the room at his feet: his family and guests flanked him on either side, and with his pipe in his mouth, he prepared to enjoy his favourite play.

The audience was entirely made up from the party beneath his roof, or belonging to the place.

There were his two Hebe daughters, with their intended swains, several ladies and gentlemen staying in the house, and every servant, from the butler to the greasy kitchen wench.

It was the old gentleman's peculiar delight to interrupt everything that was going forward. If he heard a line misquoted, he stopped the performance, or else called upon his party to hiss that fellow off. If he heard anything that particularly pleased him, he interrupted the scene with as little remorse, in order to drink to the speaker, and commend him for his elocution.

"A prologue, a prologue; hang me but I'll have a prologue. To't," he began, as soon as the curtain drew up, and Orlando and Adam appeared, and were about to commence. "Manager, I say, manager, d—n thee, where hast thee hid thyself?"

"I beg your pardon, Sir," said the manager, running in, his points only half trussed for the senior duke. "I beg your pardon, but there is no prologue to this piece."

"There is not, chops, ay?" said the Squire; "that's all you know about the matter. I'll have a prologue notwithstanding, or I'll hang the whole lot of ye. Here's a pretty fellow, my masters all," he said, turning to the company.

"Can't find a prologue to *As you like it*. D——, I'll give you one myself—one that comes as pat to the purpose as one of Sancho's proverbs."

He accordingly laid down his pipe, ordered the butler to wheel his great chair round, faced the audience, and commenced the prologue to *Pyramus and Thisbe* :

If these lads offend, it is with their good will.  
That you should think, they come not to offend,  
But with good will. To show their simple skill,  
That is the true beginning of their end."

Being, however, three parts drunk, he forgot the rest, could not regain the thread of his discourse, and sticking fast in his speech, finished it by roaring out the song of, "Hark the hollow woods resounding," giving the view-halloo, yoiks, tally-ho, hark forward, tantivy, with the voice of a stentor. He then ordered his chair to be countermarched back again, and desired the performance to proceed.

Before the first scene was gone through, however, he had interrupted the performance half-a-dozen times, and read the actors such a lecture, that they found it difficult to play their parts at all.

"Harkee, gentlemen, vagabonds both," he

roared, "see that ye stick to the advice given ye by the great, glorious, good, and wondrous Will. Give us less bellowing and strutting, good master Orlando ; and do you, old Adam, play your part like a hale old man. Less of that whistling and piping with childish treble. My service to ye : that's better ; ha, ha ! Now you're at it again, Orlando," he continued ; " hiss me that fellow off. Ah ! shame on ye both ; you're acting abominably, and speaking what was never intended or set down for ye. Yoiks, tally-ho, ho ! boys ; hark forward, there to him, rattler hilloo, ho, ho !"

It was thus the old Squire continued to torment those of the performers who displeased him in their efforts ; and sooth to say, being as sorry a set, with one exception, as ever stepped upon the boards, and never having attempted *As you like it* before, knowing hardly anything of their parts too, they really deserved his censure.

Meanwhile, the audience continued in one roar of laughter from beginning to end of the first scene ; whilst the squire, what with twinges of the gout, and the repeated shocks he received at hearing every line of his favourite play mis-spoken, continued to make such diabolical faces,

and utter so many complaints, that the actors were reduced to the same situation.

Amiens was the exception I have mentioned. He was personated by a remarkably good-looking young lad, who had only joined the company a few days before, a stranger to all the company, and although he had apparently never before followed the profession, an exceeding good actor. The squire was enraptured with him as soon as he made his appearance, laid down his pipe, and insisted on drinking his health in a bumper immediately. He also fell desperately in love with the lady who played Rosalind.

“Fine gal,” said he, “by the Lord ; with a most sweet voice ; plays Rosalind like an angel,—a heavenly Rosalind ! My service to ye, lass, I wish ye merry, and a better Orlando than that thin-faced gull we have just hissed off.” In short, the Squire applauded Rosalind to the echo, and her beauty and liveliness restored the good humour which the two sticks of the former scene had disturbed.

Thus the first act ended, and my turn approached. I cannot say that I felt quite easy under this sort of infliction ; indeed the whole company were rendered somewhat nervous by the downright Old Squire and his uncereemonious

remarks. He was getting more fuddled, too, and ever and anon complaining of the delay between the acts, crying out for Jaques and his favourite speech about the poor sequestered deer in the forest; whilst his two lovely daughters, hanging about his chair, sought to quiet his irritability, and persuade him to fill his glass less often.

Our company had been rather put to it for a supply of foresters for the scene, and some of the old gentleman's serving men, two grooms, the helper and the footman, had been pressed into the service, and put into such costume as the exigence would allow of; for the company were not only wanting in figures for the play, but there was also a difficulty in dressing them when found. In fact, the strolling company resembled that described by Goldsmith, when the same coat which served Romeo turned with the blue lining outward, served for his friend Mercutio; a large piece of crape sufficed at once for Juliet's petticoat and pall; a pestle and mortar from a neighbouring apothecary's answered all the purposes of a bell, and the landlord's own family, wrapped in white sheets, served to fill up the procession.

Under these circumstances, which I did

not discover till just before we had assembled to play our parts, I felt considerable annoyance, especially when I had to make my debut before such an uncereemonious judge as was seated before us. I felt as much ashamed of my companions, indeed, as Falstaff did of his recruits. However, the bell invited us, the second act commenced, and "my co-mates and brothers in exile" were fairly in Arden.

Meanwhile, whilst the second act was thus in preparation, the hearty old buck had been drinking potations pottle deep, and completely sewed up the one fiddler who, seated before the lights arranged across the room, constituted our orchestra.

"Hang thee, thou villanous scraper," he roared, "thou hast played us but that one sorry tune all this time. Thou shalt drink, man—there's rum punch for thee. Egad, but I'll put life into thy precious fiddle-bow!"

In short, the fiddler was soon whistled drunk, and like Master Robert Shallow, was carried off to bed.

The similitude of our company to the description of the strollers above, was indeed, nearer than the reader would have imagined; for the doublet of Orlando was, with many apologies, appropriated by the manager, with the addition



of a hunting bugle and a cross-hilted *couteau de chasse*, as the hunting-gear of the melancholy Jaques. How they intended to manage when Orlando and Jaques would appear on the stage together, I know not, nor indeed had I ever an opportunity of discovering, for the performance came to an abrupt close before we arrived at that part of the play.

The good Duke was played by my friend, the manager, who was both short and fat; I myself was upwards of six feet in height, and the rest of the foresters were as ungainly in their appearance as they were motley in apparel. However, I played my part to the satisfaction of the audience. The Squire was enraptured, broke his crutch in applauding, and drank my health half-a-dozen times, before I had got through his favourite speeches about the wounded deer. The ladies also did me the favour to approve of my personation of the character, and threw their bouquets at my feet. The Squire praised my voice, the ladies my person.

“D——,” cried the former, “but that fellow can act. There’s none of your clipping and cutting, wringing and clinging, attitudinizing, ranting and raving, like a beggar in an epileptic fit.

He's a good man's picture too : a good-looking, strong fellow."

In fact the whole audience, from the master of the mansion to the kitchen wench, were enchanted with my powers, and I felt elevated accordingly, when another unlucky stroke of fortune once more levelled me to the common standard of humanity. In the next scene Orlando was absent without leave ; we were to have exchanged coats again, as per agreement, whilst Duke Frederick gives directions to his people to make search after Celia and Rosalind. The stage waited, however, and no Orlando was to be found.

"Dang that weasel-gutted Orlando," said the Squire, "I suppose he's gone along with Rosalind and Celia to Arden."

"I would it were no worse, Sir," said the butler, who had left the room to help the search, and now returned, with a face of dismay. "But my pantry is completely sacked, and all the plate gone with them."

It was too true : gone he was, together with the gentleman who had played the wrestler, and Old Adam. They had taken advantage of the whole household being spectators of the scene, and unmolested had packed

up and made off with all the plate they could readily lay their hands on. This of course caused an abrupt termination to the play. The Squire was in a furious rage; and ordering the doors to be secured, sent instantly for a constable to have us all conveyed before a magistrate. As for me, I fared worse than any of them; for Orlando, who had been priggish in the early part of the evening, had taken the opportunity of pocketing one or two of the stray spoons, before he changed his coat; and the idea of the greater robbery striking him, from seeing the plate left exposed in the pantry, he had in his eagerness overlooked the more petty theft, and left me the reversion of his misdeeds.

I might, however, have still escaped disgrace but for my own wilfulness, as the Squire declined at first to subject me to the ordeal of a search. I, however, insisted upon being searched like the rest, and, to the horror of myself and astonishment of the audience, in the pockets of my doublet were discovered the drumsticks of a devilled turkey, a slice of cold plum-pudding, two silver forks, and a gravy-spoon.

It was in vain that I protested my innocence, and accounted for the stolen articles being found

upon me in consequence of having assumed the real thief's doublet. It was in vain that I protested that my ignorance of the knowledge of the treasures I carried about me was but another proof of my honesty, as, although I had been annoyed by their weight and clatter, even whilst I enacted my part, I had forbore to make search after the annoyance, in consideration that the pockets of another man's coat ought to be as sacred from my fingers, whilst on my back, as if it was on his own. The Squire, now in a maudlin state, and past reasoning with, was inexorable. He vowed he could have consented to forgive me if I had not acted Jaques so well, and I doubly deserved punishment accordingly.

"None but men of fine parts, I tell thee, lass," he said to his daughters, who urged the impossibility of my intending to commit the felony, "none but men of fine parts deserve to be hanged. This is some stage-struck youth, who has run away from his friends ; and by the blood of the Mirabels, this will be a lesson to him as long as he lives. Take him awa, constable, kick the rest o' them out of doors, and send out horse and foot after the other runagates."

## CHAPTER V.

I'll disrobe me  
And suit myself,  
As does a Briton peasant : so I'll fight ;  
So I'll die.

Away, boy, from the troops, and save thyself ;  
For friends kill friends, and the disorder's such  
As war were hood-winked.

SHAKSPERE.

SUCH was the commencement and finish of my theatrical career. I was now utterly disgusted with life, and, like Macbeth, "'gan to be aweary of the sun." The shame and disgrace of this last business affected me more than any thing that had yet happened.

It was on the third evening after these unfortunate theatricals, that as I was seated in the cell of the prison to which I had been conveyed, I felt so totally unhinged at the sad prospect before me, I was tempted almost to end my life and misfortunes together. Dejected and wretched,

without one ray of comfort, my eye rolled from the roof to the floor of the wretched cell in which I was confined, in all the frenzy of despair, and seizing a knife which lay upon the table before me, I was about to plunge it into my heart, when my hand was stayed by some one, who, in the agony of my mind, I had not previously noticed being admitted to visit me.

My visitor seated himself unceremoniously upon the truckle bed which stood beside the walls of my cell, and I knew him directly for the youth who played the part of Amiens at Wildhawk Hall.

“ I have arrived, it seems, at an opportune moment,” said he. “ Avoid that last resort of the unhappy, Mr. Snooks. Combat the fiend. I bring you good news ; the real thief has been discovered. Master Orlando, and his companions were yesterday taken at Liverpool. They have completely exonerated you from all share in the theft. You may, therefore, consider yourself at liberty.”

It had struck me, during the time we had been acting, that I had somewhere seen features which closely resembled those of this youth ; but I totally failed in calling to mind who he bore so great a likeness to amongst my recent friends. He was a slight, effeminate-looking lad, with hair

dark as the raven's wing, and the complexion of a gipsy.

The miserable soon make acquaintance ; and we became friends from that hour. I was the more inclined to meet his advances towards an intimacy, as I found he had exerted himself greatly to discover the delinquents in the recent robbery, and prove my innocence. He seemed, like myself, "out of suits with fortune," and to have moved in a genteeler sphere than that in which I beheld him. So much of his history he confided to me, that, being at variance with his relatives, he had taken to the stage, and being a good musician, with an agreeable voice, he intended to quit the present wretched company, and try for an engagement amongst a better set. We agreed, therefore, to club our small stock of cash together, and together resolved to seek for better fortune.

As soon, therefore, as I was formally set at liberty, we took our leave of the town of Derby, in whose prison I had thus been for a short time an inmate, and together took our way to Manchester. Here we got an engagement with the company at that time playing there ; and becoming favorites with the manufacturing audience, managed to put money in our purse. With all our predilection, however, for the pro-

fession we had chosen, Gilpin Swart, for that was the name he chose me to know him by, found it was not quite so much to our taste as we had anticipated. To meet the tastes of the audience before whom we exhibited, we were compelled to play our parts according to their ideas, instead of our own. To speak and act as nature dictated made no impression; but to strain the voice to an unnatural pitch, then suddenly drop it to a whisper, in fact to rave and bellow, attitudinize and strut, was we found, the only way to merit applause amongst the mob—the only way, too, to gain it. We therefore, resolved to quit a town where monkeys and wild beasts were evidently more suitable to the tastes of the inhabitants than actors of the legitimate drama.

It is not necessary to dwell upon the stragglings life we now led for many months, eating where we could get it, and at times half starved for weeks together. There is perhaps no class of individuals more thoughtless or improvident than the poor player. Whilst pinched with hunger, he is compelled to appear merry as a grig, in order to move to laughter the pampered and the *ennuyés*; yet no sooner has he coin in his pocket, than in the licence of the tavern it is spent.



My youthful companion was a great comfort to me in my adversity. As long as he was with me, so attentive was he to all my wayward wants and wishes, that he was more like my servant than my friend. There was, however, a reserve about him which I could never sufficiently account for. I could never "delve him to the root," and find out the slightest cue to his history. It was a silent sorrow that he bore with him : a grief he never expressed. But his attachment to myself was unbounded since the time we had first met, and I returned his friendship in an equal degree, and forbore to press him for his secret.

It was whilst we were amusing the inhabitants of the town of Gravesend with our professional powers, that I first heard of the intended organization of a body of Englishmen for the service of the Queen of Spain. Totally disgusted with our present mode of life, the idea of something in the way of actual service, was delightful to me, and I instantly resolved to enroll myself under the banners of the British Legion.

I broke the subject to my companion ; but he rather, I thought, disliked the idea. He turned

pale at its mention, and tried to dissuade me from the project. I was, however, so determined on the adventure, that he at last agreed to go with me. Like Archer and Aimwell, I resolved, rather than starve by slow degrees in the streets of an English village, to drag my unfortunate body to some foreign counterscarp, and die gallantly in the breach. I was the more resolved in this as I had learned, within the last month or so, that my father still resided abroad, very much involved and straitened in his circumstances, still completely under the influence of his wife and her relatives, though much better in health ; and he had so great an aversion to my very name, that it was never allowed to be mentioned in his presence. He had completely disinherited me.

As we heard that the part of the Legion which had just departed upon the expedition, was on its first enrolment in rather a disorganized state, being composed of "the cankers of a calm world and long peace," we resolved, as we had a few pounds at that time in our pockets, to seek the Spanish shore, and there offer our services, in the hope of obtaining commissions in the force, or serving at all events in a somewhat less degrading situation than that of private soldiers.

When, however, we arrived in Spain, and sought the head quarters, I found, on reconnoitering, so many faces that I had seen and known whilst running my brief military career in England, that I was unwilling to have my story canvassed. The chances were, I thought, that I should quickly involve myself in fresh quarrels with my brother officers, even if I did obtain a commission; and, together with my young companion, I enrolled myself in the corps of —, a flank battalion, composed of desperadoes brave as the weapons they carried, brothers in arms as in adversity, ready to die for each other as to eat with each other, and vowing neither to give nor receive quarter in the field.

This corps, indeed, suited our purpose to a hair. We had professed to each other that we came to Spain to die; to be rid of life in battle, unknown, uncared for, “sword in hand.” For myself this was excusable, as I knew there was no distinction I could gain, no rank in the service I had enlisted into, which would restore me to that which I once had been, or ever again give me the friends I had once owned. But I ought to have hesitated before I led my youthful companion

to take so desperate a step, and involve him in the dangers of such a service.

However, young as he was, he seemed equally ready to set his life upon this cast as myself. For him, he said, existence had no charm; life held out no hope. For a whole year we had now been together, I had never once seen him smile. With these feelings, we were the very fellows for the death and glory men, and were received into this splendid battalion as worthy comrades of those who professed, for the most part, the same sentiments as ourselves. Men from various nations were enrolled in this corps amongst the hardy Basques, Poland, France, Italy, Germany, and other countries had their representatives, all professing the same dreadful carelessness of life, and vowing neither to give nor take it in the field.

It is unnecessary, as it would be painful, to describe the scenes I witnessed whilst serving amongst those gallant and desperate men. Death we beheld in its most hideous form, till he became absolutely uncared for from his very familiarity amongst us; and my companion and myself grew in great estimation with the whole corps.

Gilpin Swart especially had endeared himself

to all who knew him, by his quiet manners, his affection to me his comrade, and his gallantry and cleverness in action. Though so slight and youthful in figure, he was capable of enduring fatigue with the strongest Basque in the company to which he belonged. Towards myself especially his devotion was as extraordinary as it was heroic; twice he had saved my life in the field, when severely wounded I lay helpless where I had been shot down. Whether or not the experiment of seeking for an alleviation to the cares and miseries of an unhappy life, answered with others who had enrolled themselves in this service, I know not; to many it brought the bloody death they professed to seek, whilst others again seemed to imagine that in outvying their comrades in the recklessness of their deeds they both revenged and forgot the sorrows that had sent them as offerings to the "fire-eyed maid of smoky war." Gilpin and I, however we might admire the conduct of this brave band when in the field, saw many things that filled us with horror and affright, in the dreadful deeds which were sometimes enacted when the field was fought and won. One act perpetrated by some members of the corps, at length brought down so dreadful

a punishment upon them, that the remembrance will never be effaced from my mind.

It was whilst we in lay in Grenada, that a party of men from various nations committed an act of sacrilege and murder of so heinous a nature, that the General resolving to put a stop to the repeated crimes which had lately taken place, after in vain endeavouring to discover the real culprits in the transaction, determined to resort to the old law of decimation.

Accordingly, the regiment being paraded in the principal square of the town, the business proceeded; I would willingly spare myself the relation of the painful scene which followed, but that it is necessary to my unlucky tale. The culprits were, I believe, known to many of their comrades, yet no man, even to save himself from the awful chance, thought for one instant of giving up their names. The act for which, perhaps, the innocent were about to suffer, had been a dreadful and wicked act, but the Guides professed the most chivalrous devotion towards each other, and to the last address of the General, requiring them to spare him the dreadful alternative, by denouncing the guilty, they were silent to a man. I pass by unnoticed the splendour of the scene; the sun's rays

glinted back from the arms of the different regiments drawn up in that awful square ; the gallant staff which attended the General, and all the pride and pomp consequent upon the imposing nature of the dreadful example about to be given. Indeed I scarcely marked it. Drawn out amongst the battalion about to be told off, I felt no fear for myself ; but a dreadful apprehension of the lot falling upon my youthful comrade, so unmanned me, that I could scarcely stand. I glanced along the line, and every face was stern as if about to receive the word of command to charge upon the enemy's lines. I ventured one look upon poor Gilpin, and his countenance was as placid and happy as if he was about to witness a bridal, instead of the dreadful scene shortly to be enacted. I scarcely stop to notice the horrors of suspense, whilst the numbers were called, and every tenth man ordered to the front, and added to the ghastly body so shortly to be slaughtered.

To be brief, what I dreaded, actually happened—the ninth number fell upon myself, the tenth upon Gilpin Swart. From the moment we were enranked upon this ghastly parade, I felt it would be so, and yet the reality came upon me like a stroke of thunder. I

felt myself the murderer of this poor and affectionate boy.

Rushing from the ranks in a frenzy of despair, I entreated of the officer in command, that I might myself, take the fate which had fallen upon my friend. The whole battalion, iron men as they were, would have scarcely hesitated the exchange, so greatly had the youth endeared himself to all. It was, however, in vain that I sought to take the fatal lot upon myself; it was in vain I said he was a boy—a perfect child, who was about to suffer—innocent of the crime as the Commander-in-chief. It was in vain I pleaded that he had friends and connexions of rank and fortune in England, who doubtless grieved for his absence, and would be made happy by his return; whilst I myself, alone in the world, without home, without friends, without country—life a burthen, unknown, unmourned, should bless the chance which ridded me of existence.

My vehemence, notwithstanding the opposition of my friend, caused the officer, to whom I addressed myself, to pause and refer to the Commander-in-chief.

“ ’Tis in vian you plead for me,” said Gilpin, as we stood locked in each other’s arms. “ There is no power can alter the stern law that



dooms me ; and even if your generous wish should be allowed, I oppose myself to its being carried into effect. I wish to die, and embrace my fate with cheerfulness. Grieve not for me, my friend, but grant me one request, and I am happy. Take this letter, and with it give me your promise, that you will forbear perusing its contents till the volleying musketry has for ever separated us."

Hardly knowing what I uttered, I gave the promise, and received the letter. The next moment he was enranked amongst the doomed. I remember little more of the dreadful scene; a dizziness came before my eyes as I beheld him standing amongst that unhappy section. The dreadful sound of musketry seemed to tear open my brain, and I fell heavily upon the earth.

For one moment I had resolved to break open the letter I held in my hand, in hopes something in its contents might have saved my friend ; but his eye was upon me, even whilst the fatal muskets of the firing party were being brought to the present, and the remembrance of my sacred word held my hand. Unlucky in that, as in almost every act of my life, had I broken the seal and my promise, I had saved my friend.

When I recovered my senses, I found myself lying on a pallet stretched upon the flooring of one of the cells of the convent, the Guides were then quartered in. At first I looked wildly around for the faithful friend, the youthful comrade, who had been my intimate and inseparable comrade, my adopted brother. In the next the scene wherein I had borne so prominent a part, presented itself in all its dread reality before me, and I recollected the packet poor Gilpin had, with almost his dying lips, recommended to my perusal. It was still fast clutched in my hand, and tearing it open, I eagerly perused its contents. Grief, astonishment, and regret wholly pervaded me as I did so.

The contents ran somewhat thus:—

“She who pens these words, your sometime comrade, Gilpin Swart, is a female, and the daughter of your bitterest foe.

“A presentiment that the doom of death surely awaits me in the dread trial we are about to undergo, has induced me to change the firm resolve I had made, never to divulge my secret, and stand confessed to one I have loved, not wisely, but too well.

“Could, indeed, the purest, the most disinterested, the most unstained love, expiate the

offences and the villany of that part of my family, whose dark deeds have brought down ruin upon your head, that expiation had been mine.

“ To be brief, for I have now small time to make the confession : from the first hour I saw you in your father’s residence, I loved you. Your generous nature, your high and chivalrous bearing, your sorrows, and even your pride, together with all the evils that fell upon you from the machinations of my own family were additional incentives to my ardent affection, and converted that love into a species of adoration.

“ The utter hopelessness of my feelings ever meeting with the slightest return, was no bar to my indulgence in the secret affection which wholly pervaded me ; that most fantastic of passions, which, once felt, is never forgotten. In fine, it was my only, my dearest indulgence, to contemplate you from a distance—to live but on a glance of your passing form, during your short visits to and from the Grange.

“ After you had left your home, exiled by the vile intrigues of my own family, I sought an interview with my father, upbraided him with the injustice and iniquity which had made you

an alien from your only parent's heart ; and in disgust, quitted his roof for ever.

“ It was a rash resolve ; but once taken, it was irrevocable. My only wish was, to see or hear something of one I but too well knew would have held me in his hate, and scorned the folly that led me to follow him, had he known the fact. But I had two excuses—a head filled with romance, and a wretched home. I therefore took a ship-boy's semblance, and followed him I loved.

“ Although often near you in your career, no chance presented itself by which I might obtain my most ardent wish ; namely, that of being so situated, that I might, without suspicion, be continually beside you.

“ At length you know the chance which threw us together. Unsuspected in sex and name, I became your friend and comrade, ‘ as we learned, played, eat together ;’ and wheresoe'er we went, still we went coupled and inseparable. During the toilsome march, I have listened to the melody of your voice ; in the lonely bivouac I have watched over you as you slept ; and in the tented field, I have shared your rations. That I might fall before you, has been my sole and continual prayer. I feel now that the day, the

very hour has arrived. One of those certain presentiments, which never deceive, has wholly pervaded me since the announcement of the punishment awaiting our band. Farewell, then, for ever ! The knowledge that you will hold me in your hate, on learning my name, will never now sadden the heart of

“ CATHERINE LEVISON.”

## CHAPTER VI.

Not a soul  
But felt a fever of the mad, and played  
Some tricks of desperation. All but mariners  
Plunged in the foaming brine, and quit the vessel,  
Then all a-fire with me ; the King's son, Ferdinand,  
With hair up staring, (then like reeds, not hair),  
Was the first man that leaped ; cried, ' Hell is empty,  
And all the devils are here.'

SHAKSPERE.

THE circumstance which I have just related, was as singular as it was unlooked for, and unsuspected. A hundred little incidents, which rushed upon my memory—incidents which had happened during my intimacy with this unhappy being, now struck me so forcibly as to cause me to wonder I had never suspected her sex. The mystery in which her whole history was involved, her secluded habits, and the devotion she had shown to me, even during the short time we had been companions, and associated with this gallant band, all

now came before me so vividly, as to make me absolutely astonished at my own blindness in not fathoming her secret. But the stirring life we had led, the dreadful scenes we had gone through, and the abstracted nature of my thoughts, incident to my fallen and degraded situation, had so wholly engrossed me, that I was both careless and regardless of matters which would doubtless have struck me in calmer and happier hours.

As may be surmised, this incident sufficiently satisfied my cravings for active service in Spain. A degree of horror of the service I was in now pervaded my mind; a carrion death seemed to sit and grin at me wherever I turned my eyes. The struggle in which I was engaged seemed marked with unnecessary cruelty, and I resolved at the first opportunity to leave it.

I was destined, however, to meet with further adventures before I did so; and it was not until the British Legion was virtually broken up, that, after I had served in numerous actions, affairs, and skirmishes, more than once narrowly escaping the death I professed to seek both by the sword and pestilence, that I quitted Spain, and all but penniless embarked on board a British steamer for the Thames.

The ill-fortune which so constantly followed, dogged the heels, and made calamity of my life, still pervaded me even on the mighty deep. During the night we were visited by an awful tempest, and our labouring barque, fretting with her paddles, and groaning and creaking in the angry waters, for some time beating, heaving, and clambering amongst the surge, seemed a solitary mark for the darting lightning to vent its fury upon, every flash showing more plainly the horrors of the black-looking depths around. At length, after lying like a speck amidst the violence of the roaring tide, during the greater part of the night, we were rendered utterly helpless, our engines swamped, our fires extinct, and the vessel consequently, a log upon the water.

It was lucky for us that the storm had now begun to subside, for, to add to our wretched state, with sailors exhausted, and passengers at their prayers, it was suddenly discovered that the vessel was on fire. A sight now ensued such as I had never beheld in all my former career—a sight, of all others most calculated to impress the minds of the beholders with the might, the magnificence of the Creator, and the utter helplessness of the poor crippled beings thus unprofitably



leading the angry waters. A small, insignificant, and trifling machine, an atom, was alight upon the surging waves; the frightened beings who clung about it, apparently alone in a world, over which the dark flood seemed rolling from end to end.

Frightful death seemed now certain to the half-maddened crew. All that was possible had been attempted, in our adverse circumstances, to put out the fire, but in vain; and it yet seemed even doubtful by which death the majority were to die, whether the hot ship would go hissing headlong down the black-looking hell beneath, or whether she would continue to heave upon the surface till she burned to the water's edge.

The confusion was dreadful. Many, unable to contemplate the fate awaiting them, threw themselves into the sea; others, in their efforts to gain the part most distant from the flames, were washed off, and shrieking, carried down; whilst the mass, crowded together where they had retreated foot by foot from the flames, stood with eyes distended, crushed upon each other, as each tremendous wave threw the burning vessel from side to side.

It was whilst I stood clinging to the rigging,

that my eye fell upon a party of the passengers, whom till now I had not seen.

I myself was in the garb of a common soldier, the uniform of the Guides, my face begrimed, and umbered with dirt and smoke, consequent upon my endeavours whilst assisting the sailors in their efforts at subduing the fire. Thus unheeded in the glaring light of the conflagration, I swung myself up the side of the vessel, forced my way amidst the press, and next moment stood beside a female, the sight of whom had, for the moment, driven even the awful situation I was in from my recollection. When I had succeeded in reaching the spot, I found that the first glance had not deceived me. Leaning upon, and supported by her father and the captain of the vessel, and regarding the scene with a resigned and steady eye, her cheek like monumental alabaster, and endeavouring to speak words of comfort to her parent's ear, was one who, in happier hours I had so well known—the Lady Constance de Clifford.

My surprize at finding them passengers with me in this devoted steamer, was the next moment forgotten in the horror I felt at their apparent inevitable fate by so dreadful a death.

The sea meanwhile immediately around the

vessel, reflecting the hot flames, looked a bubbling caldron of molten gold; whilst all beyond the immediate influence of the fire, was as black and horrible, as the reflected hue of the crashing fire was terrifically brilliant and glowing.

“Oh, Heaven!” exclaimed the agonized father of the beautiful Lady de Clifford, as the increasing heat from the burning mass gave him a foretaste of the dreadful death his child must, before many minutes ensued, surely perish by. “Oh, Heavens! and is there then indeed no escape from this most cruel fate? O Heaven! how have I sinned that thus thy wrath should light so heavily upon me? I cannot pray, my Constance; cease to urge it. Were I alone, I might feel resigned; but this is too horrible. I cannot see thee perish thus by a painful death, scorching and suffocating in the increasing heat. By Heaven, we will follow the example set by the crew, and plunge and meet a milder fate!”

So saying, the Duke seized his daughter in his arms, and in a frenzy of despair was about to leap with her into the foaming sea; but I caught his arm, arrested the consummation, and pointed to a dark and shadowy object, just discernible as it plunged through the distant gloom.

The next moment a perfect yell arose from our vessel : " A sail, a sail ; we're saved !"

It was true enough. A large vessel had, for the moment, crossed our path, and was again lost in the darkness. All was now silence and expectation. To the uninitiated, the very fact of a ship being at hand was a saving clause ; but the seamen knew better. No boat could live a minute in that sea. Our own boat had been seized, cut adrift, and instantly swamped, whilst the crew of the vessel were engaged below on the first alarm of the fire.

" There is hope, Captain," said the Duke, doubtfully, as he stood with eye intent, and body bent forwards, trying to peer into the gloom, where the ship had appeared.

The Captain was silent ; he knew too well there was none.

Another shriek of joy. The vessel had tacked, and appeared again. She came bravely on, running so dangerously near, that we seemed once or twice about to be hurled flaming upon her deck.

" A steamer," said the Captain ; " brave fellow whoever he is ; but he cannot aid us. I think I know the vessel : it's the Hotspur, Hon. Capt. Dareall commander."

“Can he do nothing for us?” inquired the Duke.

“Yes,” said the captain, “one thing he might do to save us from this increasing misery. —By heaven, my brain’s on fire,” he continued wildly, as the wind blew the flames towards us; “I cannot longer endure this scorching heat.”

“Speak,” said the Duke; “for Heaven’s sake, speak : what can be done for us ?”

“He might pour a broadside into our vessel, and send us to the bottom,” said the Captain, plunging headlong into the sea.

Despair again pervaded our ghastly crew. It was evident the stranger could render us no assistance. At this moment, some barrels of gunpowder, in the after-part of the vessel, where the fire raged, blew up, hurling a large fragment of the woodwork into the sea.

The mass came surging round, and was for the moment entangled in the fore-chains, close to where we stood.

“There’s your only chance, my Lord,” said I, pushing the Duke forward, seizing upon his daughter, and leaping upon the fragment, before the whole multitude beside us had time to swarm upon and overwhelm it.

The weight of those who gained the wreck,

disengaged it, and the next instant it was whirled clear.

It was, however, but a perilous and slippery craft; the water every moment washing over those who clung to its surface, and lessening the number in each succeeding wave. In one minute, the sudden darkness with which we were enrouned, showed that the burning vessel had gone down.

The lady had fainted; but I held her in one arm, whilst the other was twisted firmly amongst some fragments of rigging; the Duke also securely held on close beside us, as we lay.

Suddenly, the advancing paddles of the stranger showed she was at hand, cruizing about the spot where our vessel had gone down, in the vain hope to save her. The next minute, the rapid beat seemed close upon us. Still holding my precious charge, I raised myself upon my knees, and looked into the gloom before me.

Destruction from the advancing vessel seemed inevitable. I beheld the dark object, even upon the pitchy waves, just about to dash over us, as I raised, amidst the roar of the tempest, a yell of despair.

Under no circumstance is the discipline of an English ship of war relaxed. In the regu-

larity and silence with which the vessel was worked amidst the storm, my wailing cry was heard; and as the sound was carried onwards in the rushing wind, it was answered by the roar of the word of command, on the deck of the Hotspur. The prow of the vessel turned at the sound, merely grazing the fragment to which we clung, and which the next instant, crashing against the paddle-box, was driven beneath the waves. The moment I had seen the inevitable fate of our wretched raft, I had resolved to make one desperate effort to save Lady de Clifford; and as the prow of the steamer dipped in the water, in darting past, I had seized, with the grasp of a maniac, the fore-chains. Blue lights were at that moment ignited, and we were saved.

Too much exhausted to stand, I lay panting upon the slippery deck, where I had been hauled up by the sailors. My lovely burthen was safe. She had been hauled up with me, unlocked from my convulsive grasp, and carried down below.

But where was the Duke, her father, and the few sailors who had clung to the fragment when it was struck. Echo might have answered, "Where?"

Their fate was but too certain; since the star-

board paddle of the Hotspur was dashed to pieces with the blow, and the vessel itself was crippled upon the roaring tide.

The Hon. Augustus Dareall, commanding the Hotspur, was a young man of about five-and-thirty years of age, a good specimen of the British sailor. Gentlemanly, good-hearted, frank and brave; the ocean was his delight, and his ship the idol of his heart. As soon as the bustle consequent upon this accident to his vessel had subsided, and he felt himself at liberty to leave the deck, he turned his attention to the two persons who had been so miraculously snatched from the waves.

Struck with the surpassing beauty of the Lady de Clifford, who, still insensible, her long dark hair, mermaid-like, glittering in the salt spray, as she laid upon the sofa of the cabin to which the sailors had first conveyed her, he ordered the immediate attendance of the surgeon and the coxswain's wife to administer restoratives, and then directed her to be conveyed to a berth. He then inquired for the man who had been the means of saving her.

"Mr. Blowhard," said he to his lieutenant, as they turned to leave the cabin, "if the sea had swallowed up that specimen of female loveliness, I think I should have renounced it for



ever. She is another Venus, Sir, risen from the deep. I do not think I ever beheld so exquisite a face and form."

"A splendid craft, Sir," returned the Lieutenant. "I thought the first time I ever saw Mrs. Blowhard, she was a 'trim built wherry;' but Heaven save us, this lady—"

"Makes your swan a crow, Blowhard, eh!" returned the Captain. "Did you notice the poor fellow who held her so firmly in his grasp. In the hurry of the moment I had scarcely time to look on him."

"A common soldier, Sir," returned the Lieutenant, "one of the disbanded men of the British Legion, I think."

"I must see him," said the Captain, "and know who this female is. Let him be taken to my cabin, Mr. Blowhard, while I give a glance on deck. The wind is subsiding; we must make a run for the nearest port."

"The poor fellow is too much exhausted Sir," said the Lieutenant, "at present to be spoken with."

"Let him be carefully tended then," said the Captain; "and as soon as I have been above, I will come and see to him myself."

Accordingly when sufficiently recovered, I was visited by Captain Dareall, and examined

as to who and what myself and companion in misfortune were.

"Your appearance belies your garb, young man," he said : "you are not what you seem."

"A common soldier, Sir," I answered, "of the Anglo-Spanish Legion ; nothing more."

"Enough," returned the commander. "I seek not to pry into another man's affairs. You have behaved like a gallant fellow, however, in managing to save the female your companion. Who is she?"

"The daughter of the Duke of Hurricane," said I, "Lady de Clifford."

"Indeed," returned the Captain, "I heard that the Duke of Hurricane was at Lisbon for his health. This lady then was a passenger on board that ill-fated vessel ; going out, I suppose, to join her father. This is a lucky chance for you, young man—your fortune's made. Doubtless the Duke will reward you handsomely for your exertions in saving his only child."

"The Duke, Sir," said I, "is drowned. I saw him struck beneath the waters by your paddles. He was upon the fragment of the wreck, this vessel went over."

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About a fortnight after the events narrated in

the foregoing chapter, two ladies were seated in the principal apartment of the governor's house at St. Sebastian; the younger female was evidently an invalid—she reclined upon a sofa. Her companion, who was very considerably her elder, paced the apartment as if not in the most amiable frame of mind. Both were in the deepest mourning, and the “dejected 'haviour of the visage” of the invalid, proclaimed her as melancholy as her garb.

The elder female was the Duchess of Hurricane: the younger was her daughter Lady de Clifford. The Duchess had but lately arrived from England, summoned by the news of her recent bereavement, and her daughter's consequent dangerous illness.

There was a pause in the conversation for a few minutes; at length the Duchess stopping, and regarding her daughter for some little time, thus addressed her:

“Lady de Clifford,” said she, “I am indeed surprised at the continuance of your folly. I must really insist upon your giving up this nonsense. The interest you feel about this youth is as disgraceful to yourself as degrading to your family. I have so far conceded to your wishes, as to permit every inquiry to be made after this man; and had we been successful in

finding him there is no reward I would not have conferred upon him, even to the half of my fortune, in return for the service he has rendered; but to see the daughter of a de Clifford thus pining after a beggarly outcast, degraded and worthless as this man, this Blount, has proclaimed himself, believe me, I had rather you had perished in the ocean, than that the world should know of your folly. You are now sufficiently recovered to travel, and next week I shall insist upon your setting out. I hate the sea, and this last melancholy catastrophe has given me even a greater distaste than ever of it. I shall rather therefore chance the dangers of a land journey, even in this distracted land. We will cross the Pyrenees into France, and winter in Paris."

The Lady de Clifford made no reply.

"Is not this too ridiculous," continued the Duchess, addressing the Honorable Captain Dareall, who at that moment entered the room; "I am sure I have to apologise to you for all the trouble my daughter has given in thus requesting of you to search out the soldier, who saved her life."

"It is worthy of her noble nature, Madam," returned the Captain. "I honour Lady de Clifford for the interest she has betrayed."

“Have you been more successful?” inquired Lady de Clifford, without heeding her mother’s angry looks; “I am anxious, before I leave St. Sebastian, to make every possible effort to discover this young man; not only in order that I may be the means of rewarding and extricating him from the difficulties in which he seems to be, but that during the horrors of our situation, I thought I recognised one whom I knew in happier hours. Nay I cannot have been mistaken. There was but one man who could have saved me, amidst the terrors of that night.”

“There are many men, Lady de Clifford,” said the Captain, drawing his chair closer to the sofa on which she reclined, “who would have tried, ay, and blessed the chance that sent them to your aid.”

“Your description,” said the Lady de Clifford (evading the intended compliment), “confirms me in my supposition. Did you by no chance, during our passage hither, learn his name?”

“Whilst on board the Hotspur he was studious to conceal it,” said the Captain; “but his clothes made a false report of him: he was evidently of a rank in life, superior to the situation of a private soldier.”

The Lady de Clifford heaved a sigh.

“He shunned all intercourse,” continued

the Captain, "with myself and officers. To his sad mind his misery seemed disgrace; that at least was the impression I had of him whilst on board the Hotspur. On reaching the port, after thanking me, as I told you, for the attention he had received, he was one of the first to leap on shore, and I saw him no more."

The Lady Constance sank back upon the couch, leaned her cheek upon her hand, and seemed lost in thought.

"You will pardon me," said the Captain, after regarding her for a few moments, "if I venture to say that this youth cannot, I think, be a person you have known in former days."

"I am sure of it," said the Duchess, quickly; "then you have discovered him, Captain Dareall."

"I have not, Madam," returned the Captain; "but those I have employed, have at length succeeded in tracing him. He has left St. Sebastian, and he will be lucky if he escape out of the country. For his services rendered Lady de Clifford, I hope and trust he will."

"I begin to think this is our man, after all," said the Duchess. "What has he done, Captain Dareall, robbed a church?"

“ No, madam, not exactly that; though, perhaps, what in this country will be considered even far greater sacrilege; indeed, I may say, you are not far off the truth: he has robbed the Church, in one sense, for he has broken into a convent, and stolen a nun.”

The Lady Constance again threw herself back upon the couch, and hid her face in her hands.

“ I could have sworn it,” said the Duchess. “ Ratcliffe Blount to the life; was not that the name Captain Dareall, he went by.”

“ No, Madam,” returned the Captain; “ Peter Snooks was the name the person who saved your daughter’s life went by.”

“ Now, Constance,” said the Duchess, “ I hope you are satisfied.”

“ I am, Madam,” returned the young lady.

## CHAPTER VII.

How wildly then walks my estate in France.

Hark !

It was the owl that shrieked, the fatal bellman  
Which givest the stern'st good night. He is about it.

SHAKSPERE.

My departure from St. Sebastian was indeed earlier than I had intended. It was hastened by a circumstance which happened to me a few days after Captain Dareall, had put in there to refit.

Trusting that Lady de Clifford had not recognised me in the degraded situation I was reduced to whilst our crippled vessel made for the nearest port, I kept myself as much aloof from all intercourse with the officers of the vessel as possible, and studiously avoided being seen by them on shore. Indeed, Captain Dareall had enough to employ him in keeping



his vessel afloat till he arrived in port, for the damage she had sustained in the gale was greater than at the time he imagined. Lady de Clifford too, was so seriously unwell, that I saw her not again whilst we were on board ; I however managed to ascertain that she had been received upon landing at the house of the governor, and that soon afterwards the Duchess had arrived from England.

The Duke I found had, some time before, been advised to try a milder climate, in consequence of an affection of the lungs, resulting from the wound he had received from Lord Cœur de Lion. He had wintered at Madeira, was greatly recovered, and the Duchess having preceded him to England a few months before, he had touched at Lisbon on his intended homeward voyage. How that had turned out, we have seen in the foregoing chapter.

Keeping now, therefore, as much secluded during the day as possible, I resolved to make my way across the Pyrenees and enter France. Upon deliberation, I resolved to present myself at the Château Roussillon, where, when I had last heard of my father, he was residing, and observe how matters were progressing there. The letter I had read from the unfortunate being, Charlotte Levison, had frequently recurred

to me of late, and my ideas were a good deal changed by it: I began to think that it was my duty to see after my parent, and myself observe the situation he was in. After having visited him, it was my intention to try and get into the Austrian service. A few dollars yet remained in my pocket; I was as hardy and strong as the mountaineers I had served with, and I only lingered from day to day, in the vain hope of getting but a passing glance of Lady de Clifford before she left.

One night, as I wandered through the town, in passing the angle of the wall of a convent, a small postern door was hurriedly dashed open, and a man, his sword drawn in his hand, darted into the street. He glanced hastily around, and seeing me as I stood in the shadow of the wall, called me to him.

“A soldier,” he said, soon as I approached him, “and an Englishman. Good. Bear a hand here for a few moments, my lad. My friend has failed me, you must take his place; follow quickly and silently.”

Returning the way he came, he re-entered the dark postern, and the next moment we were withinside the convent walls. A dark lantern stood upon the pavement, which he snatched up, and darting into a cavernous recess cut

in one side of the passage we had entered, he brought forth a female, closely muffled up from head to foot.

“Take this lady,” said he, hurriedly, “and await me beside the postern by which we entered. In two minutes I will join you.” So saying, he bounded up a flight of stone steps, and we were left in darkness. I did as he requested of me, for I thought at the moment I recognized a voice I had somewhere heard before. Almost carrying my charge, who seemed too much alarmed to walk without great assistance, I groped my way back, and opening the postern in readiness to make a fair start, awaited the coming of my employer.

The moon now shone full upon my companion as I continued to support her trembling form, and I found I had possession of a nun, and as far as I could judge by her clinging form, she was both young and handsome.

Hardly had I made the discovery when the clash of weapons was heard in the distance, withinside the building, and the hurried tread of some one leaping down the stone staircase six steps at a bound. I knew not at the moment, whether to stand fast, or fly, and to

add to my discomfort, the great bell of the convent began to ring furiously.

Meanwhile, the footsteps approached, and my new comrade rushed to my side. "Run for it," said he, "unless you wish half-a-dozen stilettos to hack each other in your body."

Clasping the fair incognita, and sweeping her along, myself assisting him in the effort, he dashed across the street in which the convent was situated, and after turning down one by passage and up another, he made for the suburbs of the town.

Here he led us along a dark and dismal-looking lane, till we came to a lone building, the door of which being unlocked, he dashed it open with his foot, entered, and carefully bolting it behind him, introduced us into a good-sized apartment.

"Huzza!" said he, laughing as he proceeded to light one of the tapers upon the table, we've cheated the Pope for once. Thanks, my good fellow," said he to me, "for your assistance. You've helped me to steal a nun. But how is this?" continued he, returning towards me, after he had seated his charge upon a couch, and disencumbered her of some part of the disguise she was muffled in. "Do my eyes deceive me; or is this Ratcliffe Blount?"

I was as much surprized as himself. It was my friend, Altamont di Montdider. He had commanded a regiment during the recent struggle, and played as many fantastic tricks whilst in Spain as Cervantes describes himself to have done, whilst a captive among the Moors. The last of his exploits was the present theft.

There was small time for us to compare notes, as Altamont only waited for his friend, Captain Plume, who was engaged with him in this last business, to make the attempt at getting on board a vessel and sailing for England that night. Plume was to have met him at the convent of Santissima Donzella; failing in that, they were to rendezvous at the present refuge, which Altamont had hired for the occasion.

“This meeting,” said he to me, during the intervals of his attendance upon the handsome *religieuse*, “is a curious chance. Of all men else I have most wished to discover you. When in England, according to my promise, I busied myself in your affairs, and have discovered much that it is of importance for you to know. Nay, acting under the advice of my solicitor, I have advertised you, sought you, and offered a reward for your apprehension. Having traced

you to Spain, I obtained leave and came out in search of you ; but the love of the profession drove your business quite out of my head, and I offered to serve here during this war. In fine, my friend," said he, "I advise you to quit with us to-night. Your presence, I think, is necessary at your father's residence in France, as he is completely in the power of those rogues, the Levisons, added to which, it is necessary I should carry you off, as by involving you in this affair of mine, St. Sebastian is no safe place for you to remain in. Come, then, and let us speed

For France ! for France ! for it is more than need."

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There is necessarily a hiatus in the twisted and ravelled skein, as he himself in his memoirs designated it, of Ratcliffe Blount's history ; for after this adventure of his friend Altamont, Captain Plume, who was also a party in that action, became possessed of the manuscript which, during his leisure hours at St. Sebastian, he had amused himself by composing.

It appears, however, from what I have myself been able to learn on the subject, that

Altamont di Montdidier and his innamorata, together with the whole party, were traced to their retreat, and eventually surprized before they could embark with their prize; Ratcliffe Blount, with his usual luck, was the only one captured however, the rest making their escape to France.

Doubtless it would have gone hard with our friend had he not managed to escape from confinement soon after his capture, and get amongst some of his old companions in the mountains, from whence it was not very difficult for him, by evading the outposts of the Carlists, to cross the frontier.

It was then, on a raw and comfortless-looking winter's evening, that a solitary traveller was to be seen wending his way along the high road leading to Caen. He was but scantily clad against the severity of the season, having merely the coarse red clothing of a common soldier on his body, the said garments being considerably the worse for wear consequent upon hard service; an old red forage cap also graced his head, and a knapsack was upon his back.

His fine height and the graceful proportions of his well formed limbs, his head carried aloft with an air of the most determined courage

and resolution, was not, however, to be disguised by the soiled and tattered condition of the poor habiliments he wore; and the peasant-girl, as she tripped across his path, was fain to stop and look back upon the handsome appearance of the young soldier as he passed. There was, however, no answering glance in the corner of the traveller's eye, as the lively villager regarded him; but stern resolution, and a determination to devour space, and get over the long miles, seemed to possess him as he strode onwards.

A stout oaken cudgel was in his hand, useful either as an assistant in his journey, or as a defence against assault. The night was settling down dark and sudden, and the pattering rain upon the foliage of the densely wooded country he traversed, together with the distant rumble of the thunder, announced to the traveller the approach of a storm.

He had made inquiry at the last post-house he had stopped at in the road, (some five miles back), for the Château Roussillon, and after receiving a direction to it, had also with apparent carelessness added a few questions about its present occupiers.

An English family, he was told, had been residents in the château for some time; but the



neighbourhood knew little about them. They kept much within the grounds, and except travelling occasionally to and from Caen, were seldom to be seen.

The name of the old gentleman for whom the château was first of all taken was Blount, he understood; "Le Sieur Blount, camarado," said the ostler of the cabaret. "I was hired there myself when they first came as a helper in the stables. That was when Sir Blount first came from Angleterre. At that time he brought carriages, horses, hounds and many servants, just as any other English noble; but since that, things had gone on differently, and although the château had been almost newly furnished by the quantity of articles sent for from England at that period, together with plate and other valuables, yet the whole had been lately removed at different intervals, and sent to Paris, where my Lady Blount was wintering. Sir Blount himself," added the Frenchman, "I have heard, is *un peu volage*. Ha, ha!" he continued, as he turned off towards the stables; "you English swallow so much fog in your swampy island, that you are always troubled with de *vapeurs*, as you call it. Milor Blount, I have heard, has not been seen outside the château for some months. He

must be watched, or he might cut his throat some fine day. Ah, bah ! *un mauvais sujet*, with a d——d bad set about him.”

The traveller stayed not to hear more, but throwing down a few sous for what he had taken, hitched up his pack, and addressed himself to his journey. As soon as he came to a part of the road which was intersected by a narrow and shadowy lane, he stopped, and paused for a few minutes, looking carefully around him to mark the spot, as the increasing gloom covered the landscape.

“This,” he said, “must be my route, according to the direction given me : I was to turn to the right, when I came to a rough lane, some five miles and a half from the inn I inquired at.” In saying this, the soldier brandished his cudgel, and entering the gloomy thoroughfare, continued his progress up the ascent leading into the thick woods on his right. After about half an hour’s quick walking, he arrived at some large gates, flanked by a stout wall surrounding a sort of park or chace, and from whence he could plainly discern the château straight before him.

The gateway which thus brought him to a stand, was as ancient and forlorn-looking as the mansion it led to. Two large pillars

flanked it on either side, square, massive, and lofty. One was dismantled, a broken statue lying half buried in the long grass at its base; the other was adorned by the figure of the antlered Actæon, in the agony of being pulled down by his own dogs. The gates themselves were elaborately wrought, and of iron, and so ponderous withal, that had they been open, it would have required the efforts of a strong arm to swing them back upon their hinges; at the present time, however, they were fast locked.

Our traveller, after looking through the bars for a brief space, showed he was not likely to be stopped in his progress by locks, bolts, or bars, for taking his oaken clump between his teeth, he clambered up them with the agility of a cat; and as quickly surmounting them, spite of the iron spikes with which they were garnished, he descended on the other side, and stood next moment in the park of Roussillon, and bent his steps towards the château.

Château Roussillon was one of those comfortless looking edifices, at which the English are occasionally to be found economizing in the land of frogs and red-legged partridges, yclept France. It bore the stamp of by-gone grandeur, and had evidently felt the blasts of three centuries at least; but it had

nothing of that time-honoured and venerable appearance of our own Elizabethan Halls in merry England.

There was an indescribable air of discomfort about it—a sort of private mad-house appearance. It wanted something as a residence which the spectator could hardly define ; whilst even the grounds around it, had that rubbishing, unpicturesque look, so often to be found in a foreign domain.

The stranger, after trying the foredoor of the mansion with a force that made the lintels shake, stepped a pace or two back, and gazed at it for a few moments. The shutters of the various casements were fast closed, and it looked uninhabited in the front ; he, therefore, very deliberately walked round to the rear. There was no domestic to be seen about to interfere with his promenade, and his appearance being merely that of a sturdy applicant for bread, a disbanded legionist making his way homewards, the chances are, if he had met with any of the out-door dependants, a *sacre* and an order to leave the premises would have been perhaps all he would have been greeted with.

He was somewhat more fortunate in his application for admittance on this side the

gloomy building, for on lifting the latch of the door, after entering a sort of court-yard in the rear, he found himself in a long narrow passage, evidently leading to the servants' offices.

The mansion he now found was inhabited, as the passage was lighted by two or three common looking lanterns fixed to its walls, without whose dull flame the passenger would scarcely, even in the day time, have found his way.

Directing his steps along this passage, the soldier now entered the kitchen. There was fire in the grate, and even signs of its recently having been used, articles of culinary use being strewn about, but no one was in it; he, therefore passed onwards, and cautiously ascended to the great hall of the mansion.

Whilst he paused to look around, he heard voices in an apartment near; and as he was about to introduce himself amongst the speakers, he distinctly heard his own name pronounced. He therefore thought it no degradation to stop and ascertain so much of the purport of the dialogue as related to his own person; besides, he had introduced himself, he considered, into the enemy's camp, and stratagem was all fair in war. He was determined to proceed with

something more of caution, since he had so far prospered in his exploratory movements.

“Monsieur Ratcliffe,” he heard, in the accent of a foreigner, “may yet turn up, Monsieur Levison. I think you are too hasty in your movements. According to your own account, Monsieur Blount cannot last much longer. Food, you say, is bad for his complaint. That is a bad sign, *mon ami*, an empty sack can’t stand. If the Englishman no eat, he most die; what more you have, Sare?—*Non!* I shall set my face against rough measure; ’tis dangerous, and may be discovered.”

“I do not agree with you, Count,” returned the second speaker; “for our own sakes, we must make all sure: since the old dotard signed the will in our favour, I have kept him close. This Ratcliffe, too, I have traced all through his miserable career. He was wrecked, I tell you. My informant writes me from St. Sebastian; not a soul escaped but one passenger, a lady! There are many reasons why this business should be brought to a termination to-night. I have removed every domestic, and given you a fair field, Count. ’Tis yourself must do the deed—that, you know, is part of our contract. Hark!” he said, pausing, what noise was that in the

hall. I thought I heard a footstep. Mein Got, Count, get up and look."

The Count arose from his seat; and smiling at his companion's face of alarm, he took the candle, and throwing open the door, without stepping into the hall, held the taper aloft, and took a careless look into the gloomy recesses of the vast apartment.

"It is noting my friend," he said, "but the thunder that disturb you, and the old man groaning up stairs. Why not," he said, resuming his seat, "why not settle this business yourself, Monsieur Levison; I not like the job."

"I cannot do it, Count," returned the other.

"Ah! you are afraid, Monsieur Anglais."

"I have not been a soldier like yourself, Count. I am afraid; I cannot look on blood."

"Bah! what stuff!" said the Count; "you rob the old gentleman; you get all his moneys; you make him sign de will for you; you get him down to my château, and lock him up, and try to starve him to death; and yet you cannot give him the *coup de grace*."

"You forget to add, Count, that I am to give you your share; and also——"

"*Bien*, I remember dat; and my Lady Blount is to be Countess Roussillon, to reward

me wid her fair hand—good. Where does he lie?”

In the chamber on the right, when you reach the corridor ; the key hangs above the door. I repeat, it *must* be done, Count, and to-night: psha ! 'tis but to pluck the pillow from beneath his head.”

“And the Lady Blount,” said the Count, “eh?”

“She is, as you know, only too anxious to become Countess Roussillon. You are to settle the estate upon her. The papers are all drawn, and nothing awaits us but the old man's death.”

“And you are afraid to strike the blow, Monsieur Anglais?”

“I am,” returned the other, “I confess it; and you also.”

“Me, Sare?” said the Count, sternly, “me afraid, *sacré* ! I am *soldat français*, Monsieur. I serve in the Revolution ; in the grand army, at Marengo, at Austerlitz, in Egypt. *Eh bien* ! Sare, in Spain, in Portugal—I chase your cursed nation to Corunna. Afraid, Sare?—*Non* ! I hate your cursed nation ; my *grand* curse upon it ! The *affaire* is *finie*. The old man dies ! — *allons donc*, show me the chamber !”

The traveller staid to hear no more. He



stepped noiselessly across the hall; and guided by the glimmering lamp which burned above the staircase, he cautiously and noiselessly ascended the stairs, unlocked the door he had heard described, and entered the chamber. It was a spacious apartment: a lamp stood upon the table, and a heavy-looking bedstead, antique and faded as the tapestry with which the room was hung, stood with hearse-like grandeur at the further end.

Seizing the lamp from the table, the soldier approached the bed, drew aside the curtains, and gazed upon its occupant. Wasted and attenuated, with a beard of a month's growth upon his visage, his father lay sleeping before him.

He had scarcely time to set down his lamp, and conceal himself amongst the dark furniture on one side the bed, when he heard the approaching footsteps of the assassin. The Count appeared surprised at finding the key in the door, instead of hanging withoutside. He however supposed that his nervous comrade had forgotten it in his last visit, and cautiously entered. After raising the candle, and carefully examining the countenance of the sleeper, he glanced round the room, set the lamp again upon the table, drew a long American bowie-

knife, from the breast of his coat, and stepped beside the bed.

“Ah!” he said, as he again regarded the sleeper, and felt its point, “’tis not necessary.”

Plucking the cushion from the chair beside the bed, he laid the knife in its place, and again approached it.

The soldier had time meanwhile, from his place of concealment, to observe the assassin narrowly. He was an athletic-looking figure, more than six feet in height, dressed in a military frock coat, padded out in front like the breast of a pouting pigeon, and he wore large moustaches upon his upper lip, which descended over his mouth like a portcullis.

The next moment, after poising the pillow on high with both hands, the Frenchman made a quick step towards the bed, and was about to throw himself upon the sleeper, when he was caught midway by the throat, by a gripe as if a vice had closed upon his windpipe; and with eyes starting from their sockets, he was borne backwards along the apartment, and held firmly against the wall.

For a moment the Count was paralyzed, as with blackened and swollen face he glared upon the infuriated assailant who thus pinned his head against the wainscot. The next minute he

made the most tremendous efforts to free himself. It was, however, in vain that he struggled ; his capturer held him with the strength and resolution of a raging madman ; and then drawing him from the wall, half-choked, he hurled him to the ground, and fractured his skull with one blow of the oaken towel he held in his right hand.

The reader has, doubtless, by this time surmised that the disbanded soldier, and our old friend, Ratcliffe Blount, were one and the same person. His uncompromising and resolute disposition had, for once, stood him in good stead. He had arrived in the nick of time, caught his enemies red-handed and in the fact, and saved his parent from a violent death. Having thus summarily dealt with the French Count, he kicked him out of his path, with as little remorse as if he had been a bundle of foul clothes, and turned his attention to the intended victim.

Awakened from his slumbers by the sudden conflict, the old gentleman had raised himself in his bed to behold the deadly and violent struggle taking place in his apartment ; and having been the horrified spectator of its termination, he now saw the tall form of the soldier approach

him with the intent, as he supposed, to finish the affair by his murder.

Almost helpless, and at the mercy of the fiends who had for some weeks made him a close prisoner in his apartment, coerced him into signing various documents in their favour, and for the last few days, even kept him without food, he had for some time lain in expectation of being even more summarily dealt with. It is not surprizing, therefore, that he now thought the dark hour had arrived.

His wife, who had for two years led him a life of misery, in comparison to which slavery at the galleys would have been pastime, had for the last three months been residing at the Hôtel Roussillon in Paris, having turned her sick husband over to the tender mercies of his respected Jew father-in-law.

When therefore the old gentleman beheld an athletic figure, in the garb of a common soldier, after the violent contest we have described, advancing towards him, he naturally looked upon himself as the bone of contention.

"The infernal scoundrels," he said, "cannot even agree in their villany. They have quarrelled about the spoil, before they have cut the victim's throat!"

With more agility than could have been ex-

pected from one so emaciated, he leaped to his feet upon the floor. The knife which the Count had dropped upon the chair, beside the bed, caught his eye as he did so. Sick and weak as he was, the old gentleman possessed the courage of a lion ; and with the sudden strength of despair, he seized the knife, and opposed himself to his supposed assailant.

The soldier was about to drop upon one knee before his father ; when the latter hindered the movement by throwing himself upon him, and burying the knife in his son's bosom.

Ratcliffe Blount made no effort to ward off the blow, and fell heavily to the ground ; whilst his father, exhausted by the effort he had made, also reeled and fell.

At this moment, a stealthy step ascended the stairs, the door was cautiously opened, and the Asiatic visage of Mr. Levison was thrust into the apartment. Holding the light he carried on high, for some time he gazed into the room, with a countenance of terror and amazement ; till, finding the occupants of the apartment apparently *hors de combat*, he ventured, with stealthy pace, to enter. After walking upon tip-toe a few steps, he stooped and gazed

into the face of his late ally, and then came to the right about as hastily as if he feared that the assailant, who had thus strangely cut off his companion, was at hand to confer upon him a similar favour. Approaching, next, the prostrate form of the soldier, he thrust the light into his face, and recognized him.

“Ha !” said he, quickly, “Ratcliffe Blount! —and slain, too! No, no: mein Got, he breathes! The squire dead, too!” he continued, starting up and approaching the bed. “This is strange. But stay, it may be made much of: yes; however this has come about, it makes me secure.”

Glancing round, he possessed himself of the fatal knife which lay beside the bodies; and raising it on high, was about to sheath it in the heart of the youth, when, at that moment, the sharp crack of a postillion’s whip was heard beneath the casement.

“Hillo, ho, ho !” cried a voice at the same time; “within, there; what, ho! House, I say! Signor Brabantio, ho !”

A violent knocking also now shook the fore-door of the mansion; and the bell was assailed by a jerk, that tore it from its fastenings.

The Jew leaped to his feet, at the sound,

threw the knife to the farther end of the room, seized upon his lamp, threw open the chamber door, and rushing down the stairs, fled from the scene, along the passage by which Ratcliffe Blount had entered.

He had nearly gained the exterior, when he was met by the person who had clamoured for admittance; and who, unable to gain an entrance at the fore-door, had also essayed the rear of the building, and the two ran full butt against each other.

The thief thinks every bush an officer, it is said; and accordingly, the Jew made as violent an effort to pass out, as the traveller seemed determined to get into the house.

“Halloo! there, my master,” said the traveller, keeping his opponent back by main strength; “after all this delay at the front door, you seem in a vast hurry to attend us at the rear of your dwelling. Is this your country manners, comrade, that you knock folks down when they come for assistance, eh? Here’s a carriage broken down in your filthy lane, without the gates, stuck fast in the sand, with a party of ladies nearly frozen to death. I want assistance, man; or at least information where I am to seek it.”

“In h—l, if you like,” said the Jew; “for you’ll get none here from me.”

In saying this, the Jew made another effort to rush past, and the traveller immediately knocked him down with the heavy butt of his riding whip, and entered the mansion.



## CHAPTER VIII.

Now is Cupid a child of conscience,  
He makes restitution.

SHAKSPERE.

IN the last chapter, we have seen two most opportune arrivals. The first comer was our unlucky acquaintance, Ratcliffe Blount; and the document from whence these circumstances have been gleaned, goes on further to state that the second unceremonious personage, who, after clamouring for admittance, forced his way into the interior of the château, was no other than his friend, Altamont de Montdidier.

To account for his presence at this moment, it is sufficient to state, that having succeeded in crossing the Pyrenees with his fair charge, disguised as Spanish muleteers, he found it necessary to make a halt at Bayonne, in order to recruit her somewhat bated strength, and finding the church property he had thus

appropriated to himself, like Macbeth's murders, "sticking on his hands," the fun of the adventure, also, having given place to reflection and consideration for the situation of his companion, he thought proper to marry her.

Whilst at Bayonne, he fell in with an English lady of rank, who had also just crossed the Pyrenees from Spain, and who, accompanied by her daughter, was endeavouring to make her way through France. Being without an escort, and rather choleric withal, she had been considerably annoyed during the journey; and our friend de Montdidier instantly offered his services, joined their party, and, after a fashion sometimes practised by English gentlemen when travelling on the continent, he encased himself in jack-boots and a short-tailed jacket, and rode courier to his own carriage.

It was, then, on the night we have described, that, overtaken by the storm, in passing towards Caen, the self-constituted courier mistook his road, and the carriage having broken down in the deep ruts of the sandy lane leading to the Château Roussillon, he had ridden forward, dismounted from his steed, and making his way to the "lone chartereux," arrived at the very critical moment.

After he had overturned the wandering Jew, as we have described, and made good his entrance, rambling all over the lower regions without being able to find a soul to answer his shouts and outcries, ascending to the great hall, he continued his clamours.

“ Poor house that keeps thyself,” said he, pushing open the door of the room where the Count and Monsieur Levison had held their diabolical committee. “ Ho !—Who’s here ?

If any thing that’s civil, speak ; if savage,  
Take or lend. What ho ! no answer ? then I’ll enter.”

Here he found the remains of a goodly supper upon the table, a flask or two of champagne, a most inviting Périgord pie, a boar’s head, big enough for the sign in Eastcheap, and half-a-dozen delicacies besides.

After refreshing himself with a glass of the champagne, which stood so invitingly upon the table, he resolved to proceed further in his search, and straightway walked up stairs, with the intent of arousing the sleeping family ; and arriving at the corridor, kicked open the door of the first apartment he came to.

Here he met with a sight, at which even his firm nerves were shaken ; and starting back, more quickly than he had entered, he stood

transfixed at the spectacle which presented itself.

Three prostrate bodies were upon the floor, the polished oak of which was crimsoned with the tide in which they lay. The gloom of the apartment, dimly lighted by the one solitary lamp which stood flickering upon the table, together with the deserted look of the building into which he had intruded, and which seemed only tenanted by the dead, quite overawed him; after gazing for a few minutes upon the sight before him, he felt inclined to turn about, and taking a flying leap down the great staircase by which he had just ascended, he ran out of the house as fast as he was able. As he continued, however, to gaze upon the bodies, he thought he beheld one of them move; the next moment, a deep groan was uttered, and then a hand was raised a few inches, and dropped heavily upon the floor.

Stepping into the room, at the same time grasping his heavy hunting-whip in his hand, he looked around, raised the candle from the table, and stooping down, peered into the face of the person who had thus shown signs of life. It was a man in the garb of a common soldier—his friend, Ratcliffe Blount!

Forgetting all his former fears, he set down

the candle, raised him in his arms, took the flask of brandy from the pocket of his courier's jacket, and poured half the contents down the wounded man's throat. In fine, he succeeded in restoring his friend once more to life, and binding up his wounds, proceeded then to examine the state of the old gentleman who lay beside him; and he had the satisfaction, in a short time, of seeing both his patients in a somewhat better and more hopeful condition than he had found them in.

The wound which Ratcliffe Blount had received, was a severe and dangerous one; and, had the old gentleman possessed a trifle more strength, it would, doubtless, have been instantly mortal. As it was, the coming of his friend, Altamont de Montdidier, who was no contemptible surgeon, and who succeeded in staunching the blood, saved him. Sir Blount, too, as the Frenchman termed the father, he also had the happiness of restoring to his senses, by the aid of the same panacea he had administered to the son, namely, a draught from his flask of *eau de vie*. The Frenchman, however, puzzled him the most.

"This fellow," said he, "is peppered for this world, at all events. I think I see the sign-manual of my friend here," he continued, turning him over, and gazing upon his face; and

then regarding the cudgel which lay beside him, he said, "And I, moreover, Monsieur, suspect 'most foully did you play' for what you have gotten."

After returning to his belated party without, and guiding them through mud and mire to the château, which, without informing them of the events which had taken place, he hinted belonged to a friend of his own, he proceeded to do the honours of the mansion, setting the servants who had accompanied the travellers, to work to make a glorious wood-fire upon the hearth, and serve out the refreshments the ladies stood so much in need of.

"Here, your Grace," said he to the portly-looking personage, who, enveloped in furs, spread her extended palms over the grateful blaze of the crackling logs. "Here, your Grace, are the remains of a goodly supper, which the knave butler has, doubtless, been too idle to clear away. I entreat you, in the name of my friend, to do justice to the viands, after having so long been frozen in yonder inhospitable lane. Lady de Clifford," he continued, "follow Mistress de Montdidier's example; after a glass of champagne, you see, she is already deeply engaged in discussing the merits of that *pâté de foie gras*."

In short, Altamont not only managed to play the host to his fellow travellers, arranging mat-

ters for their accommodation during the night, stabling their horses, and aiding them in every possible way ; he also contrived, soon after dawn, to procure the assistance of a surgeon for his friend, he himself attending to both the invalids during the intervals which he could devote to them. Indeed it was not till the next morning, through some *contre-temps*, or the prying curiosity of the chattering grisette, her maid, that her Grace of Hurricane discovered, to her astonishment, that the reason the host of the château had not made his appearance, was because he was unable, from illness, so to do ; that his son also, lay dangerously wounded in the chamber next to the one she herself had slept in, that Château Roussillon was the name of the mansion in which she had found a refuge, and that she was under obligation, for the hospitality of the said Château Roussillon, to the father of her eternal enemy, Ratchiffe Blount.

This was rather a disagreeable interruption to the harmony of the breakfast party ; and Altamont de Montdidier, who had been suddenly called out of the room to his friend, whose wound had broken out afresh, returned to find the Duchess with eyes extended, and no pleasant expression of countenance, listening in

amazement to the story her maid had heard from Claude Maralli, the chasseur, who had gathered it from Pierre, the postillion, that Sir Blount had been shot through the head last night by a gang of robbers ; and that his son, who had returned from the wars, had been nearly killed by the same ball, whilst the Count Roussillon himself was actually, at that moment, lying dead in the tapestried chamber above them.

“ Mr. de Mont-di-dier,” said her Grace, with deliberation, “ I am greatly obliged by your exertions in our favour here, and the refuge you have procured us ; but, Sir, I fear, in the present distressing circumstances of this family, we are greatly intruding. Will you, therefore, do me the favour to order my carriage round as soon as possible, that we may proceed onwards to Caen without delay.”

“ It is quite unnecessary, Lady Hurricane,” returned Altamont. “ So far from our presence here being an intrusion, my friend would be delighted if we spent the Christmas here. Besides which, I cannot, at the present moment, leave the château, till I am assured of our hosts being out of danger.”

“ But I can, Sir,” returned the Duchess, drawing herself up ; “ and having particular reasons why I wish to reach Caen early, I must



insist upon setting out forthwith. Carlostein," said she to the attending servant, "order the carriage out at once."

"It is impossible, Lady Hurricane," returned Altamont; "perfectly impossible, I assure you."

"Impossible! Sir," returned the Duchess, "how impossible?"

"Because I, this morning, lighted the kitchen fire with one of the hind wheels," said Altamont, turning off. "There was no wood cut in the château; the snow is a foot and a half deep without doors, and no water was boiled for breakfast."

\* \* \* \* \*

The winter of the year 183—, was a particularly severe one. The snow in the gardens of Chateau Roussillon was on a level with the hedge, whilst the park and open country around, in many places, also lay enrobed four or five feet deep in the same white garment.

Then icicles hung by the wall;  
And milk came frozen home in pail;  
Then blood was nipped, and ways were foul,  
And nightly sung the staring owl

To-who:

Tu-whit, to-who, a merry note,  
While Greasy Joan did keel the pot.

Christmas day, on that same year, was kept at Chateau Roussillon, in the regular *Old English style*. The party, 'tis true, was but small; but as they sat and feasted in the great hall of the château, looking down from the elevated position they occupied, upon the assembled domestics and dependants, who seated at a lower board discussed the roast beef, turkeys, plum-puddings, and minced pies, set before them, it was altogether a scene of hospitality, such as had not been witnessed in that mansion, at that festive season, for the last half century, at the least.

As soon as the tables were drawn, and the ladies had sipped their coffee in the withdrawing room, Altamont de Montdidier commenced organizing a little dance amongst the domestics, himself leading off with the Duchess of Hurricane, in order to set the thing going with proper spirit.

Ratcliffe Blount, meanwhile, was seated beneath the ample chimney-piece, holding converse sweet, and whispering a flattering tale in the ear of Lady de Clifford. He was still pallid from the effects of his wound which, but for the unremitting care and attention bestowed upon him night and day, during the fever which had supervened, a care such

as only the affection of woman can bestow, would have doubtless proved fatal.

On the other side of the hearth sat his respected sire, and the black-eyed bride of Altamont de Montdidier. As the old gentleman watched the pallid features of the returned prodigal, and blessed his own stars that he had been spared the dreadful retaliation he had so nearly inflicted upon the child who came to save; improved too in health and strength, by the load of care that coming had relieved him from, as he listened to the cheerful sound of the French horn and tabor within the hall, contrasted with the violence of the storm without, he experienced a greater share of happiness than he had known for years.

\* \* \* \* \*

The history of Ratcliffe Blount, now necessarily draws to a conclusion. Indeed all further circumstances connected with his subsequent fate we might, perhaps, never have had an opportunity of presenting to our readers, but from the perusal of a letter received by Lieutenant Snaffle, from Major Sabretash. The latter officer had been dedicating a twelvemonth's leave of absence to foreign travel, and whilst viewing the wonders of the world abroad, had fallen in with one or two of the *dramatis personæ*, who have figured in the foregoing tale.

It happened that Lieutenant Snaffle, (by the way, he was now at the top of the list of Lieutenants, with money lodged for the purchase of his troop), chanced, whilst in the Emerald Isle, again to fall in with Captain Plume, and the meeting naturally leading them to recur to the subject of the curious manuscript they had perused in the cabaret at Ballyoflaherty, Lieutenant Snaffle offered to gratify the curiosity of his friend by reading part of the epistle he had received from Sabretash, a few days before. We therefore give the extract to our readers exactly as the Lieutenant gave it to Captain Plume.

MAJOR SABRETASH TO LIEUTENANT SNAFFLE.

“ It is so long, my dear Snaffle, since I have had the favour of a line from you, that I am surprised at my own forgiving disposition, in condescending to write again. Not a bit of news have you given me since the —th Hussars left Canterbury, at least three months ago. Were I, indeed, to treat you according to your deserts, I should abandon so dilatory a correspondent ; but, in truth, I have news of these parts, which I think likely to interest you. Ah, my dear fellow, Paris, and Naples, and Vienna, are all very well, but I sigh for those delightful scenes in which we were actors, during the last

season in London. By the way, I have made use of my introductions, here at Vienna, and become acquainted with some splendid specimens of female excellence, as various in style as the portraits which adorn the walls of the gorgeous palaces they dwell in. The Princess of Schloss Johannisberger, for instance, is a perfect specimen of the Rubens' school. The Baroness Altenberg, again, is as dreamy-looking and lovely as her own Titian. Madame Vandenhenden might have sat for the spouse of Vandyke; whilst the Duchess of Landsdorfhausen is exactly like the portrait of good Queen Bess, by Hans Holbein. But to see them all waltz, my dear Snaffle, would be a year away from your life.

“ There is, however, a something wanting about these foreign beauties, which I am at a loss exactly to define. They fall short, very short, of our own swan-like and peerless dames of Britain, such, for instance as a N——n, a S——d, or a Sey——r, with intellect throned in beauty. By the by, I was much struck with an English lady of title, whom I saw, the other night, at the Grand Duke's ball. The intelligence that rested upon her noble forehead, the delicately but proudly formed nose, the chiselled lip, that never parted but to show the pearly teeth within, altogether, made me desirous of

gaining a nearer view of this fair creature, as she whirled along in the maze of the waltz. In doing so, I was induced to notice the cavalier whose arm she sought after the dance was over. Judge of my surprise, when in the splendid regimental of an officer of Austrian Hussars, I recognized our friend, Ratcliffe Blount.

“ After the first greetings were passed, he introduced me to the lady whose beauty had so struck me, the daughter of the Duchess of Hurricane, now Lady Constance Blount. His wars, he said, were now over. He had been married six months, and intended to reside some years abroad. As I continued on terms of intimacy with them during my short stay at Vienna, I learned many things appertaining to his history, some of which will, I dare say, surprize you. Amongst other matters, he informed me that Wharncliffe Grange was being rebuilt, some coal mines having been discovered on the estate, which had increased the value of the property at least a couple of hundred thousand pounds. The Levison party were at length dispersed and discomfited. The elder Israelite, after making his way to Paris, and informing his daughter of their intrigues being all blown, fled to America, in order to save himself from transportation. Mrs. Blount senior soon afterwards eloped to the same land

of freedom, in company with Captain Catchflat, carrying with her all the property she had succeeded in scraping together, and her infant. The young cub being completely left in the lurch, turned bonnet to a hell, in Paris; in which capacity he might, perhaps, have thriven, but for the impertinence of your old acquaintance, Captain de Montdidier. That most eccentric of individuals accompanied Lords Hardenbrass and Cœur de Lion, one night, to a hell, in the Rue Rivoli, carrying with them a sack-full of Napoleons, in order to break the bank. They would, no doubt, have succeeded, but for the circumstance of a row taking place during the play, and the Frenchmen showing fight. The two noblemen being unknown, de Montdidier persuaded young Levison to tweak Lord Hardenbrass by the nose; whilst Lieutenant Bullyman, who was also amongst the players, attempted to confer the same favour upon his companion. The consequence was easily to be conceived. Young Levison got so tremendous a thrashing, that he has never recovered it. Mr. Bullyman suffered a similar martyrdom at the hands of Lord Cœur de Lion; and the whole party were arrested, and carried off to the guard-house.

“ And now, my dear fellow, I think I

have given you all the news that will interest you. Yet, stay, there are yet one or two of your friends I have not mentioned. Lady Hardenbrass, whom you remember as Miss Villeroy, has, I hear, been for some time separated from her husband; difference of temper is the alleged cause, she having turned Puseyite. Mrs. Allworthy still continues to spend half the year in foreign travel, and is expected shortly on a visit to Lady Blount, at Vienna. But the most extraordinary thing of all is that Altamont de Montdidier, to whose society the Duchess of Hurricane took a great fancy, before the party broke up 'at Château Rousillon, managed to make up a match between her Grace and the elder Blount; and as the old gentleman still continued a great invalid, and both were rather warm in temper, he dispatched them off to Grafenberg, in Silesia, to the care of Vincent Presnitz, to undergo the cold water cure."

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# MURDAKE HALL,

## A WARWICKSHIRE LEGEND.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### INTRODUCTORY.

The image of a murder done in Vienna.  
Gonzago is the Duke's name, his wife Baptista. You  
Shall see anon ; 'tis a knavish piece of work.

SHAKSPERE.

MOST of our readers will remember the outward favour of many buildings of the time of bluff King Harry the Eighth. In fertile Warwickshire they are frequently to be stumbled upon during a ramble through the ruralities of that interesting and delicious country.

Let us call to remembrance, then, an ancient dwelling belonging to a family of condition of

the times of the Tudors. A dilapidated gateway gives entrance to the domain, through which you gaze down the dark and melancholy avenue upon the ample windows of the noble looking mansion at its extremity, and which leafy tunnel displays the iron-grey, monastic-looking edifice, as though it was some Flemish painting seen through an artist's tube.

On a closer view we behold the rampant animals upon each crumbling pillar of the noble gateway ; and then, to relieve the eye, glance at the rich verdure of the mossy carpet, darkened down and overshadowed as it is by the wide-spreading trees of the avenue.

Our attention is then drawn to the curious and elaborately carved balcony over each window of the building ; to the various shields and coats of arms, the grinning and distorted faces, and the cunning workmanship everywhere displayed on its frontispiece, together with those high and massive twisted chimneys, so peculiar to the eccentric edifices of that age, and which seem to shoot up like horns from every part of the roof of the buildings.

Utter melancholy and silence reign around the long deserted scene where so many generations of the (sometime) family, so long its proprietors, kept up a noble hospitality; nay, perhaps, many other races have succeeded in possession, have died there, and are forgotten.

As we loiter around the now empty and shattered building, and look up at its curious balconies and clustered chimneys, or peer through the ample windows into the gloomy recesses of its apartments, which stately dames, knightly gentlemen, lovely daughters, and gallant sons, have been wont to grace, filling the glades, and walks, and gardens around, with sounds of mirth, and life, and jollity, we wonder, and grow sad as we think how short-lived their aspirations after fame and fortune! As we reflect on the futility of their loves and hates, their jealousies and fears, their fierce contentions and their deadly feuds, how vain and ridiculous life itself appears, when not a single heir remains to inherit their vast possessions. The old shell of their once proud habitation seems to stand alone, a melancholy and mouldering mausoleum, to tell the tale of their sojourn upon the earth; nay, per-

haps, the very walls they reared, together with the domains of their ancestry, thus outliving their race, have become the property of their bitterest foes.

**CHAPTER II.****MURDAKE HALL.—THE FAMILY OF THE  
MURDAKES.**

The place that once knew them  
Knows them no more.

SCOTT.

MURDAKE HALL was a vast untenanted and half ruinous mansion in my school-days. Like Cumnor, its neighbourhood was a spot deserted by the country people around; they "avoided its ancient moss-grown walls." Some "withered murder," so strange and so unnatural as to have been handed down for more than two centuries from sire to son in the adjoining village, had given it an evil reputation; whilst the tourist or wayfarer seldom stumbled upon its solitude in their rambles through this part of the world. The mansion was so remote from any frequented road, and so completely embosomed in the thick woods around, that it

was rarely intruded on by either gentle or simple.

I loved its melancholy and deserted neighbourhood. There was an inexpressible charm in its old world look, and in the dark, shadowy, and ghost-like haunts around. The long dank grass which grew in its forsaken courts, and the unpruned shrubs and neglected trees of its gardens and pleasure-grounds, which completely hid the walks with their encroaching boughs, were to me more interesting than the most elegant and well-trimmed parterre in the kingdom.

Often, when other lads spent their half-holidays in playing at cricket upon the adjacent common, I would steal away, and loiter till night-fall about the woods, and wander through the gloomy apartments of Murdake Hall.

There were sundry legends too, connected with the old place, which I felt considerable delight in hunting after and connecting together, in order to make out something like a connected history of the former possessors of this domain.

Sir Clinton Murdake was a gentleman of ancient family in the county of Warwick. On the domain allotted to his ancestor by the Conqueror, for the use of his good sword at Hastings, this same Sir Clinton, in the earlier

part of Harry the Eighth's reign, erected Murdake Hall.

The Murdakes had hitherto, from the period of their ancestor's successful adventure with Duke William of Normandy, been an honourable, a gallant, and fortunate race. The sons ever foremost in the listed and tented fields, and the daughters lovely as they were virtuous.

The Crusades, however, and the White and Red Rose wars, together with those constant contests in the "vasty fields of France," had rather used them up; and lastly, entering heartily in the cause of the unfortunate Charles Stuart, they completely ruined their fortunes, so that the great grandson of the erector of the above-named mansion, a soldier of fortune, with nothing but his good sword to feed and clothe him, was serving as a colonel of cuirassiers, under the Great Gustavus Adolphus, just before the period in which the events about to be narrated in this veritable history are said to have taken place.

A run of ill luck will sometimes pursue a family as steadily for a time in the game of life, as it is not unfrequently seen to do in games of chance. Accordingly, Sir Clinton Murdake, after amusing his leisure hours in the erection of the magnificent pile which half ruined him in completing, fin-

ished the farce of overhousing himself by going to the other extreme, by unhousing himself altogether.

Like many others of the English gentry of that period, he broke his back by laying his manor on it, (as Shakspeare has it), and sold his estate to furnish forth himself and numerous followers to the "field of the cloth of gold, 'twixt Guynes and Ard."

Sir Clinton, then, and his retinue, "glittering in golden coats like images," were amongst the most brilliant of that gallant assemblage, where, indeed, "every man that stood, showed like a mine;" and the good knight, after that view of earthly glory was over, had the poor satisfaction of returning to the neighbourhood of his sometime home so much involved in difficulties, that, like many others, who with equal folly and extravagance had sickened their estates in the same cause, he was obliged to sell Murdake Hall, its parks, and walks, and manors, which having become the property of another, he settled upon a small estate which yet remained to him, and broke his heart in unavailing regrets at the sacrifice he had made, in order to perform his part well and chivalrously, in the vanities of the passage of arms in France.

This was the first commencement of the



family downfall. It is truly observed, that sorrows seldom come but in thick succession: so it was with the Murdakes, till, as I have said, the old mansion, after changing ownership half-a-dozen times, at the period of our story became the property of a miserly old hunk, who with his only son was then residing there. This man, whose name was Hugh Hubald, having realized, by mercantile and other transactions, a splendid fortune, emigrated from the neighbourhood of Wapping, and set up for a fine gentleman in Warwickshire; having purchased Murdake Hall, some half-a-dozen years before, for about a quarter its value.

## CHAPTER III.

## A NEW FAMILY—A SUCCESSFUL RIVAL.

Oh hell! to choose love by another's eye.

SHAKSPERE.

OLD HUBALD, whose constant care "was to increase (and, at any rate, to hold fast) his store," had but one child; and his wife having been dead many years, his great wish was to perpetuate his name, and leave his vast property to this youth. Accordingly, he cast about, after fairly settling down as a country squire, in order to find some young lady, of gentle blood, in the neighbourhood he had thus chosen for his residence, as a fitting wife for the young heir.

It is easy to conceive, that those families of distinction who had been on terms of intimacy with the knightly Murdakes, would scarcely feel much pleasure in the society of the Hubalds,

father and son, who, with all their wealth (which they knew not how to spend like gentlemen), totally failed in carrying themselves with any degree of proper feeling or spirit, in the position their property had enabled them to attain.

The old gentleman, although professing to be fond of the sports of the field, scarcely knew a hawk from a handsaw. His kennels and his stalls were as empty as his moneybags were full; and the tower, which had formerly been tenanted by falcons, was now neglected; empty, and half ruinous, and had become the haunt of the owl and the jackdaw. The hunting-stables were also in a dilapidated condition; and the mansion itself and its various courts and offices, which, in the prosperous days of the gallant Murdakes and their successors, had echoed back the hark and whoop, and wild halloo of the huntsman and his attendant throng, and resounded with the yelp and cry of hounds and neigh of steeds, was now almost as melancholy-looking and dull as some "lone Chartreux."

The old gentleman would spend nearly half his time in pottering about his gardens, or fingering over and counting his rose-nobles; occasionally varying the amusement by sallying

forth, upon a half-starved steed, to look after a hare in the park, accompanied by a brace of hungry-looking greyhounds, and an old withered serving-man, as gaunt as his master. The son, who in conceit and silliness might have been first cousin to cousin Slender himself, got through the best part of his time in the bar of the little hostel of the neighbouring village, either playing at all-fours with mine host of the Checquers, or fuddling his weak brain with cups of canary and sack ; occasionally eyeing, like Dumbiedikes, the active movements of a buxom female, who, fresh as an April morn, and strong as porter, officiated as a sort of drawer and attendant upon those good fellows, who condescended to halt and call for refreshment at the only house of entertainment for man and beast in the village of Abbots Wickford. So that, when Old Hubald had cast an eye upon one or two of the daughters of those few country gentlemen in his immediate neighbourhood with whom business or accident brought him in contact, he was made sufficiently sensible of his son's utter unfitness to make a successful suit to them, even backed up, as he intended his offer should be, by a decent accompaniment of fertile acres.

This, together with the circumstance of the ill success which had attended all his efforts in persuading his son to give up his circle of acquaintance at the Checquers, and present himself to "the fair eyes and gentle wishes" of some of the neighbouring nymphs in the county, to whom he could then have procured him an introduction, and a hint he had also received of the attractive graces of the buxom barmaid, made the crafty old gentleman resolve to try his luck further a-field, and treat in the matter by deputy.

Accordingly he indited an epistle to a friend in Cheshire, desiring him to look around his neighbourhood for some gentleman of that county, who would be willing to bestow one of his daughters upon a youth who wrote himself Esquire in the middle of England, with five thousand pounds in his pocket, and Murdake Manor in anticipation.

In due time, this epistle was answered. The ferret-eyed and dapper little confidential clerk of Giles Goosequill himself, the crafty lawyer of Sandbach in Cheshire, accoutred in ponderous jackboots for the nonce, and elevated upon a strong-jointed, long-tailed, Flemish-built hackney, conveyed, with infinite care, and some slight danger, some six or seven days after the date thereof,

the thrice-enveloped, and many-sealed rejoinder. Master Goosequill informed his employer, that he had a client, residing at Muckslush Hall, near Congleton, a gentleman of a goodly presence and a genteel family ; that he was the father of several handsome daughters ; and provided Master Hubald was but content to look over the circumstance of their beauty and their gentility being their only portion, he had no doubt, if Master Stephen could be persuaded to make an excursion into Cheshire, and would favour him with a visit, that he would be in love with the whole family, and might choose for a wife whichever of the young ladies he considered most to his taste. The letter of the lawyer ended with the hint, that of course he expected to have the drawing up the marriage settlements, &c., and something handsome also, for bringing the matter to a successful issue, after paving the way for the introduction of his son.

Old Hubald, on receipt of this packet, distrusting his son's achievement of the adventure and the maid, unassisted, determined to chaperone him in the expedition. Accordingly, father and son, accompanied by the attorney's clerk, and attended by a couple of serving men, in their Sunday doublets, and armed to the teeth,

mounted their steeds, and next morning, set forth on their expedition into Cheshire, and arrived, without any material hindrance or adventure, at the town of Sandbach.

Here the old man contrived with the attorney to get himself presented to Squire d'Arbercourt, one market day, when that gentleman had ridden into the town to look upon a yoke of oxen, and at the same time consult with Master Goosequill upon matters appertaining to his somewhat involved affairs; then over a cup of claret and a cold capon, at lunch with the Cheshire squire, he introduced his hopeful son, and the subject next his heart.

In fine, Squire d'Arbercourt, a good, honest, sporting, country gentleman, whose whole soul was in his dogs, his horses, and his hawks, and whose taste therein, together with the consequent round of joviality which such pursuits led him into, had considerably involved his affairs, caught at the idea of so good a match for one of his daughters, and saw no objection, provided the youngsters liked each other, that Master Stephen should take to wife his eldest girl, Dorothea.

In fact, he shut his eye to the want of descent in the son-in-law offered, and forgot his own Norman shield in the well-filled and hoarded

money bags, so opportunely displayed by old Hubald.

Like Squire Western, he swore in his heart that his beautiful child should marry the fortune, "will she, nill she;" and as for the man who owned it, even had he been an infidel, Jew, or a turbaned Turk, the gold in his purse was sufficient to make an angel of him.

"Come thy ways, lad," said he, "to the Hall to-morrow, and I'll introduce thee to the lass. She'll like thee, I'm sure on't; for thou seemest a modest civil youth, with few words and no oaths in thy mouth; and to speak truth, we've over many of the swash-buckler and rake-helly sort amongst the young men in Cheshire. The fortune you speak of, Master Hubald, is more than I ever expected for Doll, I tell thee fairly; but if the lad and lass can manage to agree, and happen to fancy each other, egad! but we'll shake hands on it, and have a rouse together, whilst the youngsters are billing and cooing."

Accordingly, the invitation being accepted, it was forthwith agreed that old Hubald and his son should next morning ride over and present themselves at breakfast at Muckslush Hall. Squired'Arbercourt, then calling for his horse and his serving-man, drove the spurs into the



steed's sides and galloped home in great glee, to advertise his wife of the unexpected and splendid match thus suddenly offered to his daughter, and at the same time prepare her to receive favourably young Master Stephen, the rich heir of Murdake Hall, as her future spouse.

Unluckily, however, for the success of the young gentleman's suit, a rival sprung up and bore off his bride, before he could win or even see her, smooth as their course of love seemed to have been prepared for them; for Master Stephen, either from feeling no sympathy in the match which thus "stood upon the choice of friends," or from the strong affection he already felt for the buxom barmaid of the Checquers in Abbots Wickford, or perchance from having devoured too many of the cheese-cakes at supper, in Master Goosequill's snug little parlour the night before, found himself so seriously unwell, as not to be able to rise the next morning and pursue his journey to Muckslush Hall. It was, therefore, agreed that his father should take the field, and render an excuse for him; and that, after relieving his pains and aches, the young man should come on so as to make his appearance at Muckslush, somewhere about the dinner hour. Before that

hour arrived, however, young Master Stephen had grown considerably worse, and was under the sharp practice of the leech of Sandbach, for inflammation. His father, meanwhile having arrived at Muckslush Hall, and having been introduced to Miss Dorothea, the toast of the whole country side, was so struck and dumbfounded by her surpassing beauty, that he quite forgot his son's suit, and making a mistake, by no means uncommon in such arrangements, he offered his own hand to the lovely young lady, promising that if she would but accept him, to endow her with three times the sum he had proposed for his son, and Murdake Hall into the bargain.

The fair Dorothea lent no unfavourable ear to this new suitor; she turned the matter over to her sire for his consideration, as by far too grave a subject for her to decide on; and provided her parent considered she was old enough to become the mistress of Murdake, wife of Squire Hubald, and mother of Master Stephen, she had no objection to take upon herself all the responsibility attending those offices. Saying which, the spoiled beauty left the two old gentlemen to dispose of her as they thought best, and calling for her attendant falconer and her palfrey, she took her

hawk upon her wrist, and sallied forth to the marshes to look out for a heron ; whilst her father being but too willing to overlook the disparity of age in this “ beauty and beast ” contract, the affair was soon arranged, and looked upon as settled.

Young Master Stephen soon afterwards returned homewards, after having been well bled and blistered, to resume his old haunt and occupation in the snug little bar of the Checquers ; and old Hugh Hubald furnished his merry Christmas at Muckslush by making Dorothea d’Arbercourt his true and lawful wife, and carrying her home to solitude and Murdake Hall.

## CHAPTER IV.

## LOVE AND HATRED.

Crabbed age and youth  
Cannot live together.

SHAKSPERE.

FOR the first few weeks after her arrival, the young bride found herself tolerably content and happy in her new abode. There were many little alterations and arrangements for her to make there, and her old husband, who at first absolutely doated upon the lovely girl, allowed her to take her own way in every thing, even becoming almost generous at her suggestion. She had her palfreys, and her dogs; her hawks, and her falconer to attend them; and, in short, she contrived during the first few months of her management, to revive and repeople the Hall; and being for the time absolute mistress of all she surveyed, where all was beautiful, because all

was new, she found herself contented and tolerably happy; teasing young Master Stephen almost to death in the liveliness of her disposition, whilst her joyous laugh as she played him all sorts of mischievous pranks, and hunted him about the apartments and gardens around, made the melancholy looking old ruin ring again. Nay, she almost weaned the youth, by continually tormenting him on the subject, from his old haunt, his flagon, and his mistress, at the Checquers at Abbots Wickford.

Ere long, however, these amusements began to pall, and although she possessed the companionship of a husband in her paradise, she began notwithstanding to feel as discontent and lonely in her new situation of mistress of Murdake, as Amy Robsart is described to have been at the monotony of Cumnor Hall. The whole tenor of her life became irksome to her; she had been accustomed to plenty of society, and a house full of roaring blades, her father's guests; and like Di Vernon, could follow the pack with the best amongst them. Now she had no pack to follow; and if she had, she must have either followed it with strangers, or alone. Old Master Hubald never listened to the cry of the hounds, or loved to feel

the bounding steed ; and as for Master Stephen, he abhorred all kinds of sport as he hated an unfilled can.

Tired, therefore, of pursuing her hawks, and disgusted with her husband's favourite greyhounds, sick to death also of wandering about the parks and gardens of the Hall, she began to pine in thought, and long for something to love and that would interest her ; nay, even something to hate would have been a relief. Her restless spirit began to hunt after new fancies, spite of all her efforts to control the feeling ; she also began to despise the old pantaloons, her husband, and as he gradually became less enamoured and indulgent to her, seeking to curb the freedom and gaiety of her disposition, at last she absolutely disliked him. " Her delicate tenderness began to find itself abused," as the old gentleman relapsed into his accustomed stinginess, and sought to keep her confined to the precincts of the Hall. He suddenly turned jealous and morose too, and she soon disrelished and avoided his society and her home, spending half of her time either immured in the solitude of her own gloomy chamber, or in wandering about alone in the woods and sylvan retreats of the beautiful chace around the Hall.

It happened one lovely afternoon, some five months after she had thus become the wife of Squire Hubald, that as she was wandering near the end of the avenue, which stretched nearly three quarters of a mile from the building, she observed a horseman advancing along the road which crossed its extremity near where she walked. In a few minutes, the rider pulling up his steed beside her, informed her that he had missed his road, and fearing that he was unwillingly intruding upon some person's property, begged the favour of being directed to the village of Abbots Wickford. The young lady, turning round and looking upon the horseman as she answered him, thought she had never beheld so noble a countenance, and so elegant a figure as the rider possessed; and the cavalier was no less struck with the rich and uncommon loveliness of the lady before him. The blood mantled in the cheeks of both as they gazed on each other, and they became confused they knew not wherefore.

The cavalier at length reiterating his question and his apology, the lady recovered herself, dropped her eyes under his ardent gaze, and endeavoured to direct him.

"You should have kept the road before you," said she, "instead of entering the

park-gates. To return now would be tedious. You are welcome to proceed through the park. Turn to the left when you reach the footpath half way down this avenue, and hold it till you gain the ruin in the wood; then take the right-hand road, and it will lead you to the place you seek."

"The way, fair lady," said the youth, smiling, "will, I fear me, be rather hard to hit; and yet these woods and these domains seem familiar to me, as though I had left their neighbourhood but a week ago, rather than a score of years back. Methinks that venerable-looking mansion yonder looks like some building I have often dreamt of when far away in other lands. Some early and shadowy recollection of this spot haunts me as I gaze. May I inquire the name of the person dwelling here?"

Wherefore was it that the lovely mistress of the domain, with whom the youth seemed so struck, blushed as she replied, that "Master Hubald was the present owner of Murdake Hall."

"Hubald," said the youth, musing and gazing around him with renewed interest. "Methought I had heard the De Courcys possessed the estate. This, then, is the seat of my ancestors: this, then, is Murdake Hall! Strange that



memory should cling to a spot which I have not seen since I was six years old. So, then, Squire Hubald resides here! and you, lady, may I ask if one so lovely is the daughter of the present possessor of the estate?"

The countenance of the lady again became crimsoned, while she stammered some evasive answer to the question, and her eyes once more dropped beneath the gaze of the gallant-looking stranger, as she thought of her aged and miserly spouse. "But come!" she added recovering herself, "let me offer you the hospitality of Murdake. Your horse appears somewhat jaded, and as I ought to possess some little influence here, methinks the least I can do is to bid you welcome to rest and refreshment before you pass the Hall. Turn not to the left, but ride up to the building. I see master Hubald yonder returning with his dogs from coursing, and doubtless he will hope for your company at the evening meal."

The traveller reined up his horse, and struck him sharply with the spur so as to show his beauty and mettle to advantage.

"My charger thanks you, lady, for your offer," said he; "for in truth we have journeyed far and fast to-day. Perhaps I may be permitted to escort you to the Hall. In me you behold

one whose family have been not altogether unknown to these domains, though now possessing but small interest in the county. I am Sir Clinton Murdake."

The lady stopped and gazed upon the speaker with renewed interest, since she saw before her the last remaining scion of that knightly race, the exploits of whose ancestry had so frequently been the theme of story in her happy home in Cheshire, and whose sometime estate she was now the mistress of.

In the noble-looking youth beside her, dressed in the becoming garb of a military man of the period, she fancied she beheld the representative of one of those paladins of old she loved to read of in the romances of the time, the only books she ever condescended to peruse, and of which her head was indeed but too full.

Who ever loved, that loved not at first sight ?

The young soldier dismounted ; and, leading his steed by the bridle, walked beside the lady, beneath the shade of those stately trees of the noble-looking avenue, towards the mansion before them.

When two young persons suddenly meet, and as suddenly take a violent fancy for each other,

as the handsome pair now before us are here seen to have done, they quickly learn each other's history.

Sir Clinton Murdake was not long in informing the beautiful woman by his side, in return for the interest she expressed for the family whose estate was now the property of her husband, that he had been high in favour with the great Gustavus Adolphus, and had seen many a hard fought field in his service, having risen to command the regiment of Finland cuirassiers; that he had himself been left for dead on the field of Lutzen, where that hero was killed, but having been found amongst the slain he had recovered of the wounds he received there. His regiment having been dispersed and cut to pieces, he had taken the opportunity of wandering home to visit his native country, and the few acres of land he possessed near the village of Abbots Wickford, before he took service again under some foreign power.

If the young and lovely wife of the owner of Murdake had previously seen reason to repent her having too inconsiderately sacrificed herself to the yellow god, before thus meeting with the young soldier in the avenue, she now awoke to a perfect horror of her situation. She found, indeed, that the vast possessions and riches of her husband

afforded no satisfaction to her, since the society of him she had taken for a husband was never sought after or even tolerated amongst those neighbours whose acquaintance was worth cultivation ; whilst those few precise, puritanical, and soured personages, who had since her marriage shown a disposition to be on terms of acquaintanceship, were in appearance, station and manner, either eminently disagreeable or unworthy of her regard. Now that she found the monotony of her existence relieved by the society of a handsome youth, whose generous, romantic, and chivalrous feelings were so entirely at variance with the sordid, selfish character of her husband, the passions of strong love and violent hate possessed her wholly. The loathing she felt for her husband was only to be equalled by the violence of her love for the gallant-looking soldier she had so recently become acquainted with.

She possessed one of those bold and daring spirits that, once aroused, sets all control and all fear of consequences at defiance. Her love for the young cavalier, who had now for some time been her husband's guest, was coupled with so great a disgust at her present situation and future prospects, that like the

ruffian in Macbeth, she was ready to set her life on any cast, to mend it, or be rid of it.

The high honour and proper feeling of Sir Clinton Murdake would have saved her from all attempts at entanglement in a *liaison*, however much he might have admired her surpassing beauty. Nay, he would fain have fled from the contemplation of an interesting woman allied to an old miser, and living in the solitude of a lonely mansion in the country. Having been from very early youth engaged in active service either in the beleagured city, or the tented field, he had neither "those arts of conversation such as chamberers have," nor had he the inclination to seduce the affections of one whom he considered unfortunate in her situation, and whose freedom of manner appeared to proceed from her very innocence of disposition.

The wily beauty immediately saw this, and laying violent siege to the soldier's heart, determined he should not so easily escape her.

Apollo fled, and Daphne held the chase.

When a woman, and such a woman, is once aroused by adverse circumstances and finds her affections either coldly received or unrequited, she sometimes becomes a demon. Dorothea,

however, had the wit and the art to mask her evil disposition, and the cavalier soon "professed himself her admirer as well as her friend."

It happened that Squire Hubald was just about this time obliged to leave his home on matters of business, connected with some lands he possessed in the neighbourhood of London. It has been observed by a great poet of a later day, that your real husband, although always suspicious, still no less suspects in the wrong place ; so it was with the lord and master of Dorothea. He felt himself so complimented with the affability of the well-bred gentleman who had honoured his roof by accepting a temporary home under it, whilst his business lay in that part of the world, that he begged the favour of him to remain until his return from the metropolis, and desired that during his absence he would exercise the authority of a master at Murdake ; giving his wife a piece of advice at parting to treat Sir Clinton handsomely, as it would doubtless pay in the end.

"I want his few remaining lands, girl, at my own price. He's a good-natured, open-fisted, foolish spendall ; I can read him as easily as if I saw through a window in his breast. I've already spoken with him on the subject, and anon I'll tell thee more. Treat him kindly, treat

him kindly ; I know more about that piece of land than he ever dreamt of. Farewell, Doll."

The youthful couple were thus left to follow the bent of their own free will. Thrown together with no one to interrupt their course of love, and nothing to control their actions, the consequences may easily be surmised. Sir Clinton Murdake forgot his high feelings of honour, and Dorothea her marriage vow. The hours flew by unheeded. They rode side by side together with the hawks, they spent whole days too upon the tranquil waters of the lake. Like Lorenzo and Jessica, they looked in each other's eyes as the moonlight slept upon some bank of wild thyme and nodding violets, and forgetting, in their present dream of enjoyment, that a time of reckoning or parting must come, they thought of enjoying a day to-morrow as to-day, and of being lovers eternal.

## CHAPTER V.

AN INTERRUPTION TO THE COURSE OF  
LOVE.

This love will undo us all.

SHAKESPEARE.

It was on the morning of the sixth day from Squire Hubald's setting forth that this unhallowed intercourse received a sudden interruption in the person of Master Stephen Hubald, who entered the oak-panelled apartment where Sir Clinton was seated after the morning meal, opposite to his beautiful hostess, striking the chords of her guitar, as an accompaniment to the song he favoured her with, whilst the lady, "with eye and ear attentive bent," fondly regarded the performer. Master Stephen Hubald, without



consideration of the charming melody he thus interrupted, or indeed at all caring for the rudeness of the interruption, bouncing into the room with an open letter in his hand, announced that Squire Hubald, his sire, might be confidently expected at Murdake that very afternoon.

This piece of news effectually dispelled the gay dreams of Sir Clinton and his innamorata. They felt, indeed, as much dismayed at the tidings, as if apparently they had now for the first time in their lives, heard of his existence; whilst the continuation of Master Stephen's "intelligence extraordinary," and his bearing, caused them even yet more discomfort and annoyance.

With considerably more resolution than might have been expected from one of such feeble wit, Master Stephen followed up his information by an attack, in good set terms, upon his mother-in-law and Sir Clinton Murdake.

"Methinks it's just as well my father does come home, Sir," he continued, addressing Sir Clinton, "for sooth to say, strange stories have been told me about you and Mother Dorothea here. Walter Arderne, the falconer, opens his mouth

very wide, Sir Clinton; and Margery, your maid, is not behind hand either, Mistress Doll; and if but the half of what they have told me be truth, the way you have acted towards my father obliges me to say, that you have behaved, Sir Clinton, like a base man. Yes, Sir, I shan't mince the matter with you; you have acted basely, Sir Clinton, in this affair."

"How, Sir?" exclaimed the Knight, starting to his feet; "dare you utter such words to me? Unsay what you have asserted, base yeoman, or I'll fell you to the earth."

Master Stephen, somewhat scared at the fiery glance of the young soldier, unsheathed his rapier, and directing its point at his adversary's breast, retreated hastily towards the door.

Sir Clinton, who was about to rush upon him, and take him by the throat, seemed suddenly to obtain the mastery over his fury. "Fool that I am!" said he, turning away, "I had almost forgotten myself. Begone! Sir," he continued, turning round once more, and addressing the straight-haired youth. "Leave the apartment, and think you have but too

easily escaped, when I excuse from you language that no man on earth has ever dared to utter to me."

"Nay, then, rather begone yourself," returned the youth, who took courage when he found the Knight declined to attack him; "here's a coil, indeed! . So I am to be thrust out of my own father's apartments, by one who has abused his hospitality and kindness. I shall not begone, indeed. And I take this opportunity of telling you, too, Mistress Dorothea, that I shall inform my father of your encouraging the addresses of this gentleman! You have been watched, madam, with your gallant, there; and I can bring witnesses of what I say. I defy you both—I do, and will call for assistance from my father's servants if you offer any violence towards me. Here, Walter Arderne, come forth and stand by me; we'll soon see who's to turn out, indeed."

"Now, the foul fiend take thee!" returned the soldier, "for an inordinate fool. Wherefore thus provoke me to inflict chastisement for these insults? Drop the point of your rapier, hound, before I do thee mischief."

In saying this the young cuirassier taking his sheathed rapier in his hand, directed it against the naked point of that of his vapouring adversary. At the first touch of the opposing weapons, the sword of the young squire flew from his grasp as if an engine had hurled it from him, and a smart blow on one side of his cheek laid him sprawling upon the oaken floor.

"Forgive me, Dorothea," said the Knight, approaching and taking her hand ; "this has come upon us somewhat suddenly. I see you are annoyed at my behaviour. I awake, as from some pleasant dreams, to see the horrors I have entailed upon you by my too heedless conduct. You must fly from this roof. Alas, that I should say so, who have so poor a home to offer you. Let us quit Murdake, and when I have placed you in safety, I will return hither to make amends to your injured husband."

As the young soldier concluded his address, Master Stephen, gathering himself up, with a countenance of some little apprehension, left the apartment ; and Dorothea, who, either from her having foreseen that this sort of discovery was likely to be made, or else from the hardi-

ness of disposition which the sequel proved her to possess, had shown a strange degree of apathy during the whole scene. Rising from the seat she had continued to occupy since the commencement of the fracas, and putting her hand upon the young Knight's arm, she thus addressed him :

“ Sir Clinton Murdake, after what has just now occurred, and after all that has passed between us, you ask me to leave this roof with you, and follow your fortunes. It is like yourself, like one of your knightly and noble race, to make the request. I, too, am possessed of generous feeling ; for me you shall never make so great a sacrifice. We have met too late. Heaven only knows how willingly I would have sacrificed fortune, fame, nay, life itself, for your sake. Heaven truly knows, that to be ever near you, I would willingly follow your fortunes, even as a servant in your train ; but it is now, indeed, too late. I leave this roof, but not with you ; only as your wife, Sir Clinton, would I consent to accompany you ; and that is at present impossible.”

“ Say not so, my Dorothea,” returned the cavalier. “ Believe me, dear lady, the bright-

test career would be but valueless unshared by you ; and were I now to leave you exposed to the cruel treatment my rash and inconsiderate conduct has entailed upon you, I should carry a very hell within my bosom. Believe me, sweet Dorothea, it would almost kill me to leave you here, after what has even now befallen me."

" Sir Clinton Murdake," returned the infatuated Dorothea, "in me you behold a woman of a disposition you have never yet perhaps had the misfortune to encounter. All the words and arguments I perceive you are about to use, will be vain and useless. I have, indeed, foreseen this matter. Nay, to tell the truth, my own servant hath repentantly confessed to me her treachery after having betrayed me to my husband's son. I have already resolved upon the path I must pursue. Fear you naught for me ; all may even yet be well ; but you must not now remain at Murdake. Mount your steed, therefore, and transact those matters you were about to engage in relative to the land you own beyond the village of Abbots Wickford ; return hither, if you will, in a week from this time. Nay, as you love me, obey my injunctions ; bethink you, I have but small

time to prepare myself for the meeting with my husband, and to think in which way I am to reconcile these unhappy matters. Meantime, I will find a messenger to bring aught I have to tell you to the Checquers at Wicksford; and should you think me worth your notice, and ask me to accompany you hereafter, perchance I may take you at your word. Farewell."

It was in vain that the Knight, however astonished at her decision and her request, sought to alter her determination. With the figure and face of a Hebe, she appeared to possess the obstinacy and determination of a demon; and, insisting upon his leaving Murdake instantly, as he valued her peace of mind and her future favour, she refused to hold further parley on the subject, but rushing from the apartment, shut herself up in her own room.

Sir Clinton, who saw a wildness in her eye which looked almost like insanity, and who had never seen a woman so chafed in spirit and so resolute before, thought that the hottest fight in which he had ever been was hardly more fearful than the scrape he had thus got himself involved in, aggravated as it was by

the extraordinary and wilful conduct of his sometime delightful friend Dorothea, which had been so strangely displayed within the last half hour.



## CHAPTER VI.

## LOVERS' QUARRELS.

Darest thou resolve to kill a friend of mine ?

SHAKSPEARE.

SIR CLINTON, after vainly trying to obtain a further interview with the self-willed, wayward, and unhappy Dorothea, who, by her strange conduct, he saw would make matters even worse than they already were, finally resolved to obey her injunctions, and leave Murdake for the time she had specified, waiting during the interval in the neighbourhood. As he, however, distrusted the safety she seemed so assured of, he resolved to present himself again ere long, and render Squire Hubald all the satisfaction he chose to demand for the wrong he had done him, and if necessary to her future happiness, bear off the lovely Dorothea from his cruel grasp. Such was the romantic notion he possessed of honourable conduct, such was the course he considered it was incumbent on him to

take, in order to repair, as far as possible, the injury he had done the husband, and the misery likely to be entailed upon the wife. With this salvo to his conscience, he lingered with no little hardihood during the greater part of the day alone at the Hall, pacing with uneasy steps the apartment ; nor till the setting sun streamed through the ample windows, colouring the oaken floor with a hundred brilliant hues, did he make up his mind to quit the mansion. He, however, resolved to return the next day and remain somewhere in the neighbourhood, for he feared much for the safety of the lady when left to combat the ire of an incensed and coarse-minded husband, with no friendly hand to protect her from his fury, which would inevitably be roused, should Master Stephen keep his promise and divulge their *liaison* to his father.

Donning, then, his plumed hat, and taking his rapier under his arm, he slowly descended the ample staircase and entered the great hall of the building. No servants were in attendance, and the door being open, he paused and looked forth into the noble avenue before him. He was in the house of his ancestors, and gazing upon the domain where so many of his family had lived and flourished in former days ;—those chivalrous and bold an-

cestors, who had helped to conquer England with the Norman invader, fought the holy wars in Palestine, and borne themselves without reproach for so many centuries back. And now was he, the last of his race, almost penniless, without profession or prospects, save his good sword and his right arm, compelled to offer himself like some hireling, for base gold to feed and clothe him. How was he now about to leave the domain of his sires, and how had he visited it! With no sign "save men's opinion and his living blood, to shew the world he was a gentleman," he had wandered from foreign lands and the service of a foreign power, into the neighbourhood where his name alone should have raised him friends amongst the rich and powerful around; had connected himself with the owner of the domain of his sires, and after accomplishing the ruin of his wife, he was about to quit the roof like some caitiff whose deeds had rendered him odious to its inmates. Such were his bitter feelings as he paused and looked out upon the rich foliage of the lovely trees before him, and the mossy carpet of the avenue which darkened their shadows.

"Strange" he exclaimed, as he stopped and

regarded the lovely view in front of the Hall, "this Murdake I have been always taught to believe, has been an unlucky spot to our race. Would to Heaven I had never revisited it! or that I had never met the too lovely being whose destiny is now mixed up with mine own."

A deep sigh caused him to turn his head, and he beheld Dorothea standing within a narrow doorway, which led to a small closet-like apartment, flanking the main entrance of the hall. She looked pale and agitated, but lovely as the Goddess of Spring. Her eyes were bent on the ground when the young soldier caught sight of her, but she quickly raised them, and after giving a hasty glance around, she signed to him to approach. The next moment Sir Clinton was at her side.

"Thank heaven, I once more behold you, Dorothea!" he passionately exclaimed; "you have then at length resolved to quit this roof."

"Hush!" said she, "we are closely observed; grant me a few words in this apartment before you leave. My maid, who knows not of the passage leading from my chamber into this closet, has left me, she considers, in the solitude above. I have much to say, and we must be brief."

She led the way within the closet ; and then opening a door so small as to cause her to stoop low as she entered it, followed by the young cavalier, ascended a flight of stone steps, and gained her own room by an entrance which was concealed behind the stately hangings of the hearse-like bed which filled a recess at one end of the chamber. Time-honoured and faded, but still beautiful, tapestry, hung around the walls of this apartment, where everything was gorgeous, heavy-looking, and massive in the shape of furniture. Huge presses, cumbrous tables, high-backed chairs with richly worked cushions, curious and fantastic mirrors and looking-glasses, were to be seen around. Yet, with all this stateliness and grandeur, the apartment had a gloomy and melancholy look, which was not a little increased by the gigantic cedar trees which grew so close to the windows, as almost to intercept the rays of the setting sun.

“My beautiful, my own Dorothea,” cried the Knight, enraptured at again finding himself alone with her, and thus brought where they need fear no interruption to their interview ; “how can I sufficiently thank you for thus blessing me with a meeting ;” and throwing himself at her feet, he seized her hand, and covered it with his kisses.

As Dorothea stood before her lover, listening to his protestations, the tears coursed one another down her cheeks, and fell upon the hand which held her own.

“Sir Clinton Murdake,” said she, at length interrupting him; “no more of this. I knew not, till within this hour, how bitter it would be to me for you to depart, perhaps for ever. How I have loved, and how I now adore you, needs not be told. Perchance we have now met for the last time on earth—perchance we may again meet to part no more: whichever fate awaits us, will depend much upon yourself. I am indeed about to put the love you are now so vehemently asserting to the proof. Nay, interrupt me not; we have short time to speak together, none for senseless dalliance. I must be frank with you.”

“Sir Clinton Murdake,” said she, as the Knight rose to his feet, somewhat impressed by the sternness of manner she had suddenly assumed, “by the hours that we have spent together, by the vows that we have in our overwhelming folly sworn, you know how deeply I at least have loved. Will you now, in my need, aid me to escape the difficulties I have involved myself in, through this too fatal love? Will you, in other words, requite my passion?”

“Will I live, dearest lady?” returned the Knight; “wherefore ask the question? I were unworthy the name I bear did I now desert you. Have I not entreated of you to fly this melancholy and ominous-looking spot with me?”

“I have answered that, Sir Clinton,” returned the lady quickly. “I will not do so. In the solitude of this chamber I have considered the best plan for me to pursue. I ask you again, and my future fate depends upon your answer, *“Darest thou resolve to kill a friend of mine?”*”

The young soldier, who had been gazing passionately at the beautiful form and lovely face of the Hebe before him, who in her extremity seemed, from the very anxiety depicted in her expressive features, (her rich brown hair hanging dishevelled upon her bosom of snowy whiteness) more lovely than ever, started back at the question, and turned as pallid as herself.

“In heaven’s name, what mean you, lady?” he exclaimed; “does my imagination conceive you aright? Would you have me murder the old man, your husband, after having wronged him, and abused the hospitality of his

roof? I trust I have mistaken your meaning."

"You have mistaken, Sir Clinton," returned Dorothea. "I need no champion to interfere between me and him, whom I am fated to call lord and master. There is another being whose death is necessary before my own safety is assured. I saw you cross swords with him this morning, and considered his fate as sealed; but that you played instead of fighting with him, it had been fairly done. You, however, suffered him to escape your awakened wrath. He must be again met, and more surely dealt with."

The young man regarded her fixedly for some minutes before he replied. There was a sternness in his look, that any other less firm than the lady before him would have shrunk from; her eye, however, quailed not; and steadily regarding him, she awaited with marvellous coolness for his reply.

"Lady," said he at length, "I fear we have grievously mistaken each other. The request you have so bluntly made to me, displays an atrocity I could hardly have conceived a woman capable of. Wherefore you should propose to me so miserable a task, as that of depriving of



life that poor and half idiotic driveller the son of your husband, I know not, neither do I know what service my doing such a deed would render you."

"Enough, Sir Clinton," returned Dorothea, "I thought a soldier, and one who had witnessed the scenes I have heard you oftentimes describe, would have thought but little of such matter as the passing his rapier through the body of so insignificant a being as Master Stephen Hubald, more especially, when an insult has been offered to yourself too, and the safety of her you profess to value is at stake. However, thanks to my own wit, I can manage to escape the difficulties with which I am encircled, without your aid."

"Tell me your plans, lady," said the Knight, "that I may aid you by my advice in this matter, since you seem determined to follow your own wayward will."

"Wherefore divulge my plans to one who has refused to act with me in the very first step," returned the wilful woman; "to one who, but that I know his name was never coupled with dishonour, I should say had displayed a want of courage:—yes, to one whom I could call a coward; and wanting in suffi-

cient spirit to encounter a simpleton who is scarcely able to manage his weapon in strife with a cowherd."

"You have so far judged me rightly, lady," returned the Knight, "I am not valorous enough to do battle with such a foe. Demand of me some service that I may perform for you—permit me to remain by your side if you fear aught here; or if you will but listen to my entreaty, fly with me to some distant country, where we may live for each other."

"Both of which plans," said Dorothea, "I have already told you are not to my mind. No, Sir, such arrangement we should repent of, before the seas were well crossed; and yet, as I before said, it may happen that we meet again, if you so wish it; meanwhile, since you will not assist me, it will materially injure both of us should you longer remain at Murdake. Our conference must now end, Sir Clinton, abruptly as it began; follow, that I may guide you out in secrecy." So saying, Dorothea, self-willed and misguided, turning swiftly upon her heel, as though she feared the Knight might make an effort to detain and hold further parley with her, once more vanished through the passage she had entered the room by. Closely followed by Sir Clinton, she descended the

steps and entered the small apartment adjoining the Hall, where, after ascertaining with great caution, that no person was present, she dismissed her lover, with small ceremony and much haste.

## CHAPTER VII.

## MURDER MOST FOUL.

Approach the chamber, and destroy your sight  
With a new Gorgon.

SHAKSPERE.

SIR Clinton, hastened to the stables in search of his horse, fully resolved to leave a neighbourhood now become singularly disagreeable to him. To his strong love for the mistress of Murdake, had succeeded a feeling amounting to absolute dislike. There appeared to him something singularly unscrupulous in the conscience of Dorothea; and her request so plainly urged upon him to commit the crime of murder, and destroy the poor youth her step-son, argued a depravity he could scarcely reconcile with one so young and beautiful.

In love, and even in friendship, a word or a look will sometimes undo all our feelings of regard, and convert them into indifference and even dislike.

Sir Clinton would have given his ancestral possessions, and the domain he was now hurrying from, had he them in his power to bestow, to the meanest peasant on the estate, provided he could have cleared his conscience and absolved himself from all connexion with the wife of the man who was now in possession of them. There seemed to him something ominous and terrible in the gloomy and half deserted mansion, and which appeared to threaten him personally.

On reaching the stable, he called for his horse, mounted and rode off through the park towards Abbots Wickford.

“I will redeem my pledge,” he said aloud, as he drew bridle, when outside the park palings, and in the deep and sandy road leading to the village. “Yes, I will keep watch over this extraordinary compound of beauty, simplicity, wilfulness, and, I begin to fear, wickedness. If I am to do her service, it must be by intruding myself into her husband’s house like a common robber, since she has thus dismissed me from her presence.

“I will return here and lie perdue, so as to be near in case of necessity. She seems to have some strange plan of operations to pursue, which will, perchance, place her in considerable trouble. Yes, I will return here this night, and watch over the safety of this wilful woman ; she forgets that I am possessed of the key to the small postern, which admits to her chamber from the plesaunce.”

The young soldier now once more turned his horse's head from the woods of Murdake, and striking him with his armed heel, soon gained the village of Wickford. Alighting in the yard of the Checquers, he threw the reins to the ostler, and entered the inn.

Mine host, rejoiced to have a customer of such quality, hastened from his easy chair in the bar, to bid him welcome.

“Fore me, but your honour is right welcome to the Checquers,” he commenced ;—for he was a right portly and merry conceited host, and fit company for an emperor as well as cobbler, when exercising his vocation in his little inn. “Ecod, but it's a raw evening, Sir traveller,” he continued. “Here Marian, lass, bestir thyself, and light up a good fire in the sanded parlour—you'll find we can make

your honour comfortable at the Checquers, I promise you that. Right sorry am I that we had not intelligence of your Lordship's traveling this road, that I might have made preparation of our best apartment, instead of your Grace being' compelled to remain thus long in the common room of the house. Perhaps your worship will honour my poor bar, by stepping into it whilst we get the parlour fire alight."

"There's no need of it," returned the cavalier, who had thrown himself upon the oaken settle beside the fire which blazed upon the hearth; "make no preparation for me, good Sir, but fill me a cup of your best canary, and order me something by way of supper, as soon as it can be prepared. I prefer the cheerful blaze of these logs, and the company of these good folks here, to the chill and solitude of your state apartment. Let your ostler take good care of my palfrey, and summon me when he's ready for his feed. I always see the oats transferred from the manger to my steed's mouth myself, mine host! it's a practice I've learnt in the wars, where a man's beast is sometimes his truest friend. I shall take the road again, too, ere nightfall, and perchance

return hither when the business I have in hand is transacted. Meanwhile, there's a broad piece in hand the whilst to cover the present expences of my entertainment."

"Your Lordship shall be obeyed," said the landlord, eyeing the piece of gold and the stranger alternately. "There's some mystery here, I suspect," he continued, as he moved away to give the necessary orders. "I wonder who the foul fiend this can be; I must go look at the steed he seems so chary of. He looks a nobleman; he's dressed like a soldier from the German wars; I wonder whether any body ever noticed him in these parts before. There's a something on his mind I guess, too," he continued, as he gained his bar, and peeped at the Knight from behind the little red blind of its window; "see how he shifts his position, Marian lass, and keeps beating the devil's tattoo with his ponderous spur upon the hearth. I fear me this restlessness of body betokens a restlessness of mind, Sir cavalier. Marian, that hero is either going to fight a duel to-morrow morning, or he has done a murder this very afternoon; we shall have news, girl, of this gallant ere long, sure as my name's Archibald Civilbonnet."



“What nonsense, uncle,” said the maid of the inn, regarding the stranger with an approving glance, as she busied herself in placing the wine upon her best waiter; “look at that gentleman’s face, and then ask yourself if he could do a deed of ill omen; why he’s the handsomest and most noble-looking cavalier that ever darkened your door-way. He’s a duke, I dare take my oath on’t. He’s either a duke, or a prince in disguise, depend upon it, uncle.”

“Egad, you may be right, lass,” returned the host; “he’s likely to be a gentleman, he’s so easy to please. Mayhap he’s a parliament member; but no, they’re but a low race now-a-days. Yes, lass, he’s doubtless some great person returned from abroad, now we are a trifle more quiet, to look after his own. See, there he is up again, and striding about the room like a restless spirit. Ecod, if he is going to fight a duel, I shouldn’t like to encounter him, duke or d—l. I’ll wager, from his very gait, that he can keep time, distance, and proportion.”

Sir Clinton, after partaking of the refreshment offered, and attending to the feeding and grooming of his steed, quaffed a cup of kindness with the loquacious landlord; and finding his mind but ill at ease, after the events of the

morning, resolved to leave the comfortable hostel somewhat earlier than he had before intended. The room was now beginning to be filled with some of the choice spirits of the village, from whose conversation he learned that Squire Hubald had just passed through the street on his road to the Hall. He therefore called to the host, and avowed his determination to depart.

"I have altered my mind, landlord," he said, "and shall ride forward something sooner this evening. My horse is fresh, and I have business in these parts which will not permit of any loitering on the road."

"Perhaps your Grace—I beg pardon, but I forget what name your Lordship called yourself by," said the host; "perhaps your Grace may honour the Checquers by returning to-night after you have settled the affairs you allude to."

"Perhaps so," returned the cavalier, "though I rather think not, as I have that upon my hands which will make me a borrower of several hours of the night."

"Your worship shall be welcome, come when you may," said the host. "John ostler shall sit up for you, though. I rather advise you to

take your ease here in my house than ride forth on this raw and comfortless evening, more especially as I cannot vouch for the safety of our roads hereabout after dark. There are ugly customers not unfrequently 'twixt this and Hill Moreton. I think your honour said you intended taking the Stratford road. The ways, too, are somewhat foul for your steed."

"We shall do vastly well," returned the cavalier, throwing his cloak over his shoulders, and smiling at the landlord's attempts to discover something of his name and business in the county, "we shall do vastly well, I dare say. Hard knocks and foul ways, and even the green turf for a night's lodging, are not altogether such novelties to either myself or my charger, good host, that they should hinder matters of business. They whose necessities drive them to the alternative of stopping one whose trade is war, upon the highway, will find but small encouragement in the exploit, you may take my word on't."

So saying, the Knight, taking a courteous leave of him of the Checquers, mounted his gallant-looking steed, and proceeded slowly through the street of the little village, as if intending to make for the town of Stratford-upon-Avon. When, however, he had

cleared the outskirts, he turned his face once again towards Murdake Hall, and proceeded by a circuitous and somewhat intricate way along a dark and overshadowed lane.

It was an unfrequented road, which Dorothea, in one of their hawking expeditions, had led him home by, difficult rather of access even in broad daylight; but, now that the shades of evening had enveloped the surrounding scene, it required all his ingenuity to make his way along its shadowy windings, without involving himself in the thick woods which grew on either hand. However, as he knew it brought him out close upon the paling of the park, and within a mile of Murdake Hall, he persevered; and after having more than once been obliged to dismount and retrace his steps, in order to gain the track, he at length found himself in the vicinity he sought. Tying his horse to a tree in the lane, he leaped the paling and made his way to the Hall.

Having nearly reached the garden wall, in rear of the building, he kept cautiously beneath the shadow of the enormous oaks, which just here threw their broad arms over the green sward beneath his feet, so thickly as to render their vicinity dark as night.

The moon shone out brightly as he paused before the small door which admitted into the gardens.

One of those old and massive walls, of which we now occasionally see the remains running round the ample pleasure grounds of some of the moss-clad and ivy-crested, mansions of bygone times, stood before him. The fruit-tree tops, silvered by the moon, encroached in rich profusion here and there, and seemed struggling to reach over into the park where he stood.

After a few minutes' hesitation, he stepped forth from beneath the shade ; and gaining the little postern door in the old wall, tried to open it ; as he expected, it was locked. Scarcely had he relinquished the iron handle which lifted the latch, and made up his mind to scale the wall, when he heard footsteps on the other side, and a key applied to the lock. Drawing himself close under the shade of the old wall, he stood fast, and the next moment the door was cautiously opened, and two persons came forth in the clear moonlight, not half a dozen paces from where he had placed himself. What was his surprise to behold in one of them the mistress of the Hall, and in the person of the other the falconer, Walter Arderne.

They appeared deeply interested in discussing some matter of import, and it seemed to Sir Clinton that the lady was urging the falconer to some act he had small desire to engage in. Sir Clinton was surprised, and somewhat annoyed at what he saw; too far from them to play the part of eaves-dropper, which he would have scorned, he yet resolved to remain stationary for a few moments, and observe their movements ere he stepped from his concealment. "Was it possible," thought he, "that he had shared in the affections of the lady with her own servant?" He determined to remain till they separated, and then to address himself to Dorothea and seek an explanation. They, however, parted at the garden-door, and the falconer having closed and locked it, remained in deep consideration for some minutes after he had done so, whilst the lady was heard swiftly retracing her steps on the other side towards the building.

After awhile the falconer seemed to have come to some sort of settlement with his troubled ideas, and moved slowly along the garden wall. He passed so near to Sir Clinton, that he almost touched him; but his eyes were rivetted upon the earth at his feet, and he saw him not. Once or twice he stopped, and ap-

peared half inclined to return, and then quickening his pace, he was soon out of sight.

Sir Clinton had, meanwhile, almost determined to abandon his intention of spending some part of the night in the gardens of the Hall, in order to watch over the safety of one who he now had reason to believe was thoroughly depraved. But feeling still that he was bound to endeavour to succour her, should she require his aid, he mounted the wall by the small doorway, and leaping down on the other side, made his way along a dark walk leading to an arbour not many yards distant from the postern door which admitted by the private staircase into Dorothea's chamber.

From this spot he could observe the window of her room, and in case of violence being offered her he conceived he must necessarily hear any outcry: in such a case he could immediately admit himself by the key in his possession and make to her assistance.

Despite the heavy fall of dew, he threw himself upon the mossy flooring of the arbour, and drawing his riding cloak closely around him, prepared to keep watch and ward beneath the chamber of her he had so lately regarded with feelings of admiration and devoted love, till the dawn should dismiss him from the duty he

thought himself, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, bound to perform.

As the cavalier reclined upon the bench within the arbour, his thoughts reverted to the first time of his meeting with the mistress of the Hall, whose disposition and conduct had, within the last few hours of their intimacy, so fearfully developed her unscrupulous character. He began to marvel within himself at the infatuation which had seized upon him; a hundred little events during their intimacy now presented themselves to his remembrance, which clearly shewed him to be the dupe of her artful conduct, and he soon began to regard himself as the seduced instead of the seducer.

Becoming more and more imbued with these altered feelings, he now blamed himself for assuming a sort of guardianship of the young beauty; and yet his romantic and chivalrous feeling of honour would not allow of his leaving Dorothea to bear the whole brunt of the *éclaircissement* he feared was about to take place, whilst he himself, in a manner, had fled. His position was ridiculous, and exceedingly strange; but nevertheless he felt that it was the only one he could, under present circumstances, occupy. In such thoughts and reminiscences he passed his time whilst the



iron tongue of the clock of the old Hall twice struck the hour of the night, without any thing occurring to disturb the tenor of his meditations.

The mansion wrapped in gloomy grandeur, changed its aspect ever and anon as the clouds rolled beneath the moon. At times it appeared grey and spectral-looking, with its Gothic casements glittering and sparkling, as though a shower of stars were reflected in their diamond panes; and then, again, it darkened down into an ominous-looking and heavily built bastile, reared from the firmest earth, with no ray of light to enliven its sombre and frowning walls.

Hitherto he had observed no sound or sign to give token of the mansion being even inhabited; but as the clock once more, with lazy chime, struck the time of the night, and proclaimed the eleventh hour, he observed a light in Dorothea's chamber. After awhile several more of the windows in the upper part of the building were illumined by passing gleams of light, as though the inhabitants were retiring to rest, and then the mansion and all around it once more lay in gloom and tranquillity. The moon now withdrew her light, and the heavy clouds gathering over the Hall,

the rain began to patter on the trees as the Knight lay and watched its shadowy walls.

He began to congratulate himself with the thought that all his fears regarding the threatened quarrel and Master Stephen's anger had taken a favourable turn, and made up his mind to leave the vicinity of the building. He had even reached the little postern gate in the wall of the garden, when suddenly the mastiff, chained in the court-yard, uttered a melancholy and long drawn howl. He paused at the sound, and turned again towards the mansion.

The baying of a dog in the silence of the night is never a pleasing sound to listen to. The trees in this part of the garden sighed in the night wind, and uttered a sort of dreary whisper. Suddenly the Knight thought he saw a twinkling light through their foliage in the direction of Dorothea's window. Again the dog uttered a long drawn and melancholy whine. The sound struck upon the soldier's heart: it had an ominous and fearful note. He quitted the door, and pacing along the mossy path of the dark walk, once more felt his way towards the mansion.

His eyes had not deceived him: there was a light, and evidently some stir in Dorothea's chamber. Suddenly he was aware of a bust-

ling noise within the room, as of persons struggling. He grasped the key of the small door, and unsheathing his rapier, made towards it, and was about to apply it to the lock, and introduce himself into the passage. Still as he heard neither shriek nor outcry, he paused. The hound again uttered a dismal and deep mouthed bay, and at the same moment he thought he distinguished the voice of old Hubald, calling for assistance as if unwell.

“ Help, Doll ! help ! ” he heard, and then all remained silent as the grave.

The Knight was fairly posed ; he stood before the door about to apply the key he held in his hand, but the present sounds within the mansion seemed no warrantry for the intrusion. A strange feeling of dread crept over him. He felt a nervous horror of the place he was in which he could not account for. On the stricken field, when on picquet, he had stood alone in the dead of night, beside the ghastly bodies of the slain, he had never felt so unmanned as in this garden. The night wind sighed around the old building, and the owl whooped from the woods in the park. He was conscious of one of those strange feelings creeping over him which sometimes occur in the gloom of a lonely and melancholy neighbour-

hood—a feeling of utter loneliness, and yet a presentiment of some person hovering in his vicinity. Sir Clinton was brave as steel; but still he felt at this moment a sort of horror which quite unnerved him. He glanced fearfully around, and found that he was not the only occupant of the garden. A shadowy figure advanced from the further end of the building towards the spot where he stood. It seemed so occupied in reconnoitering the grounds in the immediate vicinity of the house, every now and then stopping and listening, that as Sir Clinton was situate close within the shadow of the mansion, he was not perceived until it had approached within a few paces. Surprise at this sudden rencontre seemed to deprive the person of all reflection and presence of mind; he recoiled for an instant, and the knight advancing to accost him, the figure drew his sword, and violently assailed him. Sir Clinton although on his guard was well nigh wounded by the suddenness of the assault. He drew back, however, and avoided the deadly thrust aimed at his bosom, and his own rapier was in an instant before him. His antagonist was but an infant in opposition, he seemed half paralyzed with alarm, and struck wildly and at random. Sir Clinton keeping

away from his weapon, and parrying his blows as well as he could in the uncertain light, received a wound in the sword-arm as he, at length, closed upon and struck his opponent to the earth. Suddenly a piercing scream was heard within the building, another and another succeeded. The knight, who had wrenched the weapon from the grasp of his unknown antagonist, was struck with the sound, for he thought he distinguished the voice of Dorothea. Again the shrieks were repeated. He turned towards the sound, and his prostrate foe arose, and flying swiftly through the gardens, escaped. The Knight making for the postern door, threw it open, and hastily ascended the steps towards Dorothea's chamber. Shriek upon shriek rung out as he gained the sliding panel, and hastily withdrawing it, introduced himself into her apartment.

The sight which he beheld there, and the reception he met with, sufficiently surprized him. In the centre of the apartment stood Dorothea in her night-dress, and upon the bed lay the corpse of the old man her husband. She ceased her outcries as he appeared, and stood for the moment like himself transfixed with surprize.

"What devil," she at length said hastily addressing him, "what devil prompted you hither, Sir Clinton Murdake?"

"I came to succour thee, lady," he answered. "What accident has happened here? Your husband is dead!"

"No matter, Sir," returned Dorothea angrily, "begone, on your life. You have nearly ruined all by this intrusion. Fool, that you are, what cursed stupidity could prompt you hither? Quick, for heaven's sake, begone; I hear footsteps in the corridor."

"Dorothea," said the Knight, "I begin to understand you now. A horrible suspicion flashes across me. You have murdered this poor wretch your husband."

"'Tis false, meddling fool!" cried the lady, seizing the Knight by the arm, and endeavouring forcibly to eject him from the chamber.

Sir Clinton, however, stood firm, and regarded her for a moment with a searching look. Dorothea quailed beneath his glance, and staggering back a few paces, sank into a chair beside her dressing-table, and, burying her face in her hands, burst into tears.

Stepping to the table beside which she sat,

Sir Clinton took the lamp in his hand, and approaching the bed, stooped and gazed upon the face of the corpse.

Although the bed-clothes had been apparently hastily smoothed over, and all outward and visible signs of violence removed, and although no crimson tide flowed over and sullied the whiteness of the sheets, the Knight thought he there beheld enough to confirm his suspicion that the old man had met with foul play.

His face was black, and full of blood ;  
His eye-balls further out than when he lived,  
Staring full ghastly, like a strangled man ;  
His hair uprear'd, his nostrils stretch'd with struggling,  
His hand abroad display'd, as one that grasp'd  
And tugged for life, and was by strength subdued.

The Knight looked long and fixedly at the dreadful object before him, and then turning from its contemplation, he once more addressed himself to the still weeping Dorothea.

“Lady,” said he, “whatever success you may have with others, you cannot deceive me in this business. Accursed was the hour in which I first beheld your face ; peace of mind is gone from me for ever. Nay, I feel as though I had been your accomplice in this most wicked deed. Farewell, Dorothea, I obey

your injunctions, and leave you to the accomplishment of the drama you have begun the performance of. You are safe from me, whatever happens ; but from this hour you will never again behold me."

Before he had ceased speaking, Dorothea had fainted, and fallen heavily upon the floor. He heeded her not, but swiftly withdrew from the apartment, and closed the secret entrance just as the inmates of the Hall, who had been for some time clamouring for admittance, succeeded in forcing open the chamber door.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.

Master Fang, have you entered the action ?

It is entered.

Where is your yeoman ?—Is he a lusty yeoman ?  
Will he stand to't ?

It may chance cost some of us our lives, for he  
will stab.

SHAKSPERE.

ABOUT half a mile from the little town of Hill Moreton, upon the banks of a rivulet which here fell into the Avon, stood in former days a small water mill, which, together with some hundred acres of land, was the sole remaining property of the last of the Murdakes.

This little portion of land was named, in conformity with its extent, the Hundred Acres. Sir Clinton had already sold three parts of the estate, to furnish himself forth at various times during his foreign service ; and the business which had led him to this part of the country, now that his occupation was gone in the land of pike and caliver, was to dispose of those

few acres which remained to him, and the old mill which stood upon them.

The shattered ruin of what had once been a monastery, stood at a short distance. This structure had subsequently been converted, on the suppression of those establishments, into a sort of dwelling house, by the before-mentioned ancestor of the present Sir Clinton, who had in Harry the Eighth's reign, built Murdake Hall; and after impoverishing his estate at the Field of the Cloth of Gold, had retired thither, to repent of his folly.

It was early on the morning after the transactions we have narrated occurred at Murdake Hall, that a single horseman rode slowly up to the mill-house of Hill Moreton and inquired for Master Michael Windblow, the miller.

"Margaret, bring glasses, lass, and let us have the canary and sack bottles. Shew that gentleman in here, directly, and send Diccon out to take his horse," cried the hospitable old miller. Good Master Windblow had been for full thirty years crippled in his lower limbs, and confined to the parlour of his mill, where he amused himself in exercising his hospitality, and drinking with every passenger he could inveigle into his presence.

"I'm happy to see you, Sir," he began, as soon as the horseman was ushered into his snug little room. "An early stirrer, Sir. I'm

glad to see you young men can rise betimes, as I do myself. Fill my glass, Margaret," he continued, turning to the smart and exceedingly pretty girl who had answered to his hasty summons, on seeing the stranger ride up to the house. "Fill my glass, Margaret, ye slut, and hand the gentleman the bottle. Your health, Sir! I'm heartily glad to see you in my poor dwelling, be your business what it may; gentle or simple, all's welcome to old Wind-blow. I've been full thirty years, Sir, confined to this room, Sir, sore afflicted with a complaint in my spine. Yes, Sir, I've watched the shadows on field and furrow from that window, every day, these two and thirty years, and never stirred from this room; but I'm content and happy so, every thing thrives with me, and I bless God for all I possess, thanking him for his good gifts, and making no words of my ailments. Margaret, ye jade, tell Diccon to put that horse into the stable, he'll break away from him else. Let him feed him and rub him down, and then do you bring in breakfast immediately. A good lass, Sir, and well given. The fairest flower in my garden, and takes as much care of me, poor helpless devil that I am, as if I were a sucking infant."

"I am glad to make your acquaintance,

Master Windblow," said the stranger, as soon as he could get a word in edgeways; "though you have been known to me by name and reputation for years. I am glad to make your acquaintance, and to see you are the same kind hospitable man I have heard my father often speak of."

"Ah! ah!" returned the round-faced miller, "no doubt, no doubt, every body in the county knows me; that is, except the quality, for I don't keep company with folks above my station. Still, every man as owns a horse to ride on in Warwickshire has visited old bed-ridden Windblow. Where did you say you had heard me talked of?"

"Your name," said the stranger, "has been known to me further a-field than Warwickshire, Master Windblow. I have heard of you, and even from you, in other lands afar; I have seen your hand-writing, Master Windblow, in the Netherlands, in France, and in Spain."

"Ah, indeed!" said the miller, "say you so? I hardly thought my fame had reached so far. But stay, let me see. You're accoutred something like a warrior, surely you must have brought me some token from my beloved old master's son? You, perhaps, can give me tidings of Sir Clinton Murdake; who, sorry am I to say so, is engaged in the troublous wars of

the Low Countries. If so, speak, good Sir ! for I long to hear news of the last of the Murdakes, through whose family I owe all my success on earth."

The stranger rose from his seat, and looked forth from the lattice upon the lovely scene before him ; after a while he turned, and seizing the old miller's hand, wrung it heartily.

"Thou good old servant," he said, with a voice husky from emotion, "you see before you the son of your old friend, for I will not call him master, and who, in person, has come to give you thanks for the kindnesses you have so often afforded him in his hour of need. Yes, Master Windblow, to you I have no scruple in owning, that but for the timely assistance you have more than once given me when in difficulties, I had, perchance, died in a foreign land. Your kindness enabled me to gain the notice and friendship of a crowned king, and such an one as I fear the world will not soon look upon the like of again. He died," continued the cavalier, mournfully, "and would to heaven, since it was to be so, that I had perished with him. Had he lived, Master Windblow, perchance I had once more restored the fortunes of our house ; but with his fall, for the present, have my own fortunes again

become overcast. Yet, still I am not altogether without the means of repaying my various obligations to you, and I am come here for the purpose of discharging my debt, and transacting other business appertaining."

"The foul fiend take such debts!" cried the overjoyed miller. "Out upon your debts to me: do I not owe all I have to thee and thine? Have I not prospered from a stipendiary to become the master of lands and beeves, men-servants and maid-servants, horses and carts? Tush, man, never tell me, I hold all in trust for thee since thy father's death; and I give it thee out and out. Here, Margaret, ye jade, attend here; more eggs, more bread, more capons, more bacon, more ale, more sack, and more every thing. God! that I should say so, but I have lived long enough since I have seen this day, and care not how soon these useless old feet are carried out foremost, and laid in Hill Moreton church-yard. Yer health, Sir Clinton; well do I remember the day your father left the old house yonder for foreign parts, and in the service of a foreign power. You were a crack not thus high, and I begged hard that he would leave you to my care."

The old miller was well nigh beside himself with joy at the unexpected appearance of his

young landlord ; and the twain, seated before a substantial repast by way of breakfast, such as a Warwickshire yeoman would bestow upon his best friend in the good old days, eat, drank, and chatted for two mortal hours by Hill Moreton clock. While thus occupied, there arrived an accession to their party in the shape of some half a dozen gentlemen in leathern doublets and steel caps, and who, armed to the teeth, drew up their horses before the miller's door, and proceeded to make themselves rather more free than welcome.

"Come in here ! come in !" shouted the miller, as the leader of the party was apparently giving some directions to his men. "Come in here. What are ye jawing about, out there ? Come in, I say, there's no secrets in this house. Ah ! ah ! Master Gripewell, is it you out and about this morning ?" he continued, as a burly, strong-built, square-shouldered man, with a forbidding countenance, and a face covered with hair like a coppice of brushwood, entered the room. "Whose hen-roost has suffered now, eh ? Come, drink, man, drink ; baptize your beard after your ride, and invite those gentlemen in here to take a cup with you."

"Thanks, Michael, thanks," returned the other, "I'll taste your wine myself; but we've no time to stop with you this morning, we're on the track of a gallant who has committed a dark deed last night, and which, doubtless, you have heard of. . Young Master Stephen Hubald has been foully and cruelly murdered last night, and there's terrible work up at the Hall. Old Hugh Hubald is also dead, and his young wife, Mistress Dorothea, in strange distress, and hardly expected to live through the day. 'Tis a mysterious piece of work, and we are in full chase of the murderer, who I suspect has taken the Stratford road."

"How, Sir," said the cavalier, in considerable surprise, "did you say young Master Stephen Hubald was last night slain?"

"Ay, did I," returned Gripewell, who was the head constable of Wickford, "he was shot like a fat buck, Sir, with a cross-bow bolt through his brain, at the end of the avenue, and found last night by the messenger who was dispatched for a leech, as soon as the Lady Dorothea discovered her husband either dead or in a fit. Master Windblow," continued the thief-taker, after setting down his glass, and looking hard at the astonished cavalier, "perhaps



my comrades might like to take a glass this morning ; with your good leave, I'll e'en ask 'em in"

The constable left the room for a few minutes, and returning with his comrades, immediately drew a pistol from his belt, and presenting it at the head of the Knight, desired his men to secure him, dead or alive.

"Sir Clinton Murdake," he said, "I arrest you in the Lord Protector's name, for the murder of Stephen Hubald ; seize him, men, and hold him fast."

The Knight struck the pistol from the hand of the constable in an instant, and starting to his feet, half drew his rapier from the sheath, but was in the next moment borne to the ground by the five men who sprung upon him from behind, and by main strength and weight, overwhelmed him, overturning old Windblow in the eagerness with which they all sprung upon his shoulders. The young Knight, however, was not a man to be taken easily ; he arose from the press again like some tiger at bay, and almost fought himself clear of the whole crew ; whilst the effect this sudden onslaught had upon the Miller of Hill Moreton was somewhat surprising, since it wrought a miracle upon his crippled limbs.

As he was overturned in the attack, he had seized a crutch by his side, and nearly fractured the skull of one of the assailing party ; then gathering himself up from where he had been hurled to, he stood, to his own astonishment, whole and sound. He waited not to consider or comment upon the cure which surprise and alarm had occasioned, but struck manfully in, to the assistance of the Knight, who, in the next minute, stood with his rapier in his hand, and freed from his assailants.

“How, now, ye rude unmannered hounds,” cried the Knight, as he stood with his back to the wall, whilst his opponents, who had felt his strength and prowess, hesitated for the moment to oppose his rapier’s point: “how, now ; what sort of beastly attack do you call this ; and how dare you, sirrah, accuse me of murdering the youth you have named.”

“Ah,” said the miller, adopting Sir Clinton’s tone of defiance, “how dare you come into my parlour, and assault me and my guest in that fashion, ye ill-favoured set of blood-hounds ? Ecod, but I see Margaret’s shrieks have brought my men across the meadow, and may I be hanged but I’ll have the whole filthy lot of ye flung into my mill dam.”

“I must execute my warrant,” exclaimed

the constable, "and will do so, spite of all you can do, Master Windblow, or your men either. I am directed to arrest Sir Clinton Murdake for the murder of young Stephen Hubald. By the description given me, I suspect this to be the man: are you not, Sir, the person I have named?"

"I am Sir Clinton Murdake," returned the cavalier; "who accuses me of so foul a deed?"

"The head falconer of the Hall, Walter Arderne, whom you also wounded last night, in the gardens of Murdake: there's my warrant for what I do, and I demand you to yield to me, in the Protector's name, ere more mischief ensue."

"Master Windblow," said the cavalier, turning to the miller, "there is some mistake here; 'tis fit I oppose not this man's warrant. I know not which to be most surprised at, the strangeness of the accusation, or the seeming miracle that has been wrought upon your limbs. I yield myself as your prisoner," continued the cavalier, "and desire to be instantly conveyed before the nearest magistrate, that I may be able to clear myself, and explain away this mistake."

When the Knight was accordingly conveyed by his captors before the magistrate of Hill

Moreton, he found it not quite so easy a matter to clear himself of the charge against him, as he had imagined.

The person before whom he was taken, was one of the sour faction who at that time had the upper hand in England. He was a Puritan; and the very look of our cavalier, his gallant bearing, his noble countenance and his military air, like Orlando's virtues, "served him but as enemies;" and in this worthy's eye, "envenomed him that bore them." He was, accordingly, in the first place, found guilty of being a gentleman, and condemned, almost ere the accusation was heard against him.

"Let him be strongly guarded, constable," said the magistrate, as soon as he had heard the accusation against him; "take him below. I'll hear no explanation, Sir," he continued, as the knight endeavoured to make himself heard. "Gather the evidence you have together, constable, and let them attend forthwith; we shall doubtless find more in this than you imagine. These Murdakes have ever been a restless and bloody race, using the carnal weapon upon light grounds; and thrusting themselves into every man's quarrel from the conquest of this troubled land, up to the present hour. Take away that prating com-

panion also, who has so strangely found his legs in this business; I'll teach him better manners ere I have done with him, than to oppose the execution of a warrant."

"I would your honour did but hear reason, and let this gentleman speak," said the miller; "it might, perchance, save you trouble hereafter."

"I will hear him, in good time, Sir," said the stern official, "and you too, to your cost. Take them away, Gripewell, and mind, I look to you for their safe custody."

The cavalier, who had not deigned to speak, after having been abruptly silenced on his first attempt at explanation, cast a withering look of scorn upon the man in office; then turning round, accompanied his captors from apartment.

When Sir Clinton was again brought up from the apartment in Mr. Ilwill's house, where he had been conveyed along with his companion the miller, the circumstantial evidence against him was so strong, that it seemed likely to go hard with him, and even Master Windblow was confounded. The falconer of Murdake Hall stoutly swore that he had been attacked by him in the vicinity of that building, but a short time before the body of

young Hubald was discovered. He had been assailed, to his astonishment, by the Knight in the pleasure-garden, whilst making his customary rounds, ere retiring to the lodge for the night ; nay, he was pretty sure, he said, that the Knight had the mark of his weapon upon his person, as he had wounded him in self-defence, and put him to flight. This, on examination, proved to be the case, Sir Clinton having evidently received a slight and recent wound in the fleshy part of his right arm, just above the elbow-joint. The falconer further deposed to Sir Clinton having sought to fasten a quarrel upon young Master Stephen on that very morning, and even to his having struck him down, though he protested he knew nothing whatever about the origin of the dispute. Whilst the landlord of the Checquers filled up the measure of the evidence against him, by deposing to Sir Clinton's appearance at his inn on the evening referred to ; the strangeness of his demeanour whilst there ; his own sagacity and prophetic warning to his barmaid, that if the stranger had not already committed, he was about to commit some awful crime ; and even the confession of the Knight himself, that he had work upon his hands which would employ him

during the hours of the night. The landlord further stated that Sir Clinton had slunk away some minutes before young Master Stephen had visited the Checquers on that evening, as if to avoid being seen by him: that Master Stephen had come to the inn later than usual, from the circumstance of his having ridden part of the way home with his father; and that whilst sitting with him in his bar, and discussing the merits of a flask of Muscadine, the young man had hinted at some grievance against a gentleman then staying at the Hall, which he was to disclose to his father on the following morning. Moreover, the landlord affirmed he was able to produce a youth of the village who, in passing along the Rugby road, had seen Sir Clinton's horse tied to a tree in the lane which led towards Wickford, and which he knew from the furniture and caparisons to belong to that gentleman.

Sir Clinton himself refused to account for his employment, or where he had spent his time on the night in question, lest he should implicate the Lady Dorothea. Grievously as he suspected her of having been the originator of both these murders, (one of which was

publicly suspected) he considered himself bound in honour not to compromise the wretched woman, even to the sully of her fair fame, by attempting his own vindication, in explaining his reasons for being in the vicinity of the Hall when this unhappy deed had been perpetrated. As he considered himself in some sort the cause of the lady's unscrupulous conduct, he would have consented to have been torn to pieces by wild horses, ere he uttered a sentence that might endanger her safety.

Accordingly, he resolved not, in that presence, to give any explanation of his actions, after seeing the turn the affairs had taken; contenting himself with denying the crime imputed to him, and giving the lie to the falconer's charge against him. With regard to the assault committed by him on young Master Stephen Hubald, the morning of his murder, he affirmed that the youth had brought a slight chastisement upon himself, through his having used opprobrious epithets towards him, and even drawn his rapier whilst under his own father's roof. The examination ended, the young Knight quickly found himself committed to Warwick jail for the murder of Stephen Hubald of Murdake Hall, and



Master Windblow, the miller, for his share in the morning's diversion, had his newly recovered legs clapt into the stocks of Hill Moreton.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE HOSTEL.

In winter's tedious nights sit by the fire  
With good old folks, and let them tell thee tales.

SHAKSPERE.

It was about three weeks after the transactions we have narrated had taken place, that some six or seven persons were collected together in the common apartment or kitchen of the little inn at Abbots Wickford; three of them were guests, the others were mine host, his niece, and his ostler or man of all-work. A greasy-looking Joan, the drudge of the inn sprawling on all-fours, and up to her elbows in sand, keeled the pot in a sort of scullery adjacent to the apartment.

This kitchen, or common room of the hostel,

for it was the apartment into which all the guests usually chose to congregate and discuss the news of the shire, was a perfect picture of the rural comfort of those days, and might have formed a study for an artist's eye.

There was the wide old chimney, the blazing logs upon the hearth, the rafters and beams black with soot, and venerable with age, overhead; the fitch hanging like unscored armour on the wall; and the hams and tongues pendant from the roof. Whilst the shining pots and kettles reflected back the ruddy flame; and all the implements of the culinary art, necessary to a house of entertainment arranged and ready for use on the morrow, were pendant and glittering, each on its proper peg or nail around. In fact, it was a picture of a well kept kitchen, of a properly regulated hostel in Old England some two centuries ago.

The comfortable scene within doors was rendered yet more grateful to the present inmates of the inn from the roughness and violence of the weather without. It was the very witching hour of night. The rain beat against the casement, the deep-mouthed thunder crashed over head, and the fitful lightning ever and anon paled the flame upon the hearth.

The conversation of the party assembled, as is almost invariably the case under similar circumstances partook of the terrible; like the howling of the storm, it was black, ominous, and fearful. As it in some measure advances the progress of our tale, we will give it as it took place.

Mine host himself, ever a jovial and jolly companion, and whose laughter was ready chorus to the mirth of his guests, was on this night in some sort oppressed with the melancholy of the party, and more grave in converse than was his wont.

“ ’Fore gad, but this is poor weather for us, my masters,” he observed. “ If this is to last much longer, we shall have a famine in the land. What with civil wars one while, and uncivil weather another, the country’s in a hopeful condition. My fields are clean drowned, and have been so any time these six weeks past. My sheep are murrained; my pigs are measled; my cattle distempered, and the highways and byeways are alike undistinguishable: nay, I hav’nt had a guest since the sessions last Tuesday at Warwick, to darken my doors, except yourselves; and no great wonder either, with the waters out all over the country like this. Every river

in the shire I think has overflown, and I am rheumatized from crown to toe."

"You were at the sessions, I think," inquired one of his guests.

"Aye was he," returned another, "he was a witness there, and obliged to attend."

"And how went matters?" said the speaker, who was a Coventry man; "we heard Sir Clinton Murdake was condemned, and will hang on Wednesday next."

"I would I had been elsewhere," said the host, "for I begin not to like the part I have had in that business. Fool that I was, what had I to do, thrusting my say into the affair in such a mortal hurry. It's a mysterious business from beginning to end, Master Orton. As to whether or not Sir Clinton Murdake will be hanged, I can't say, as the affair is to be settled by trial of battle."

"Trouble not your head about that, landlord," said the stranger who had first spoken, and who was a discarded serving-man from Murdake Hall, "that spark is as sure of dancing upon nothing on Wednesday next, as you are of swallowing that cup of sugared sack. It was a foul murder, and hath been clearly proved upon him. I see no good there was in allowing

him so much grace, although his execution is, in consequence, delayed but a brief space."

"I can't observe," returned mine host, "how that may turn out: I never saw a guilty man look as yon gentleman bore him in court; I should'nt like to be Walter Arderne's champion, in the matter, guilty or innocent."

"Walter Arderne needs none of your assistance, whether you would or not. He's the strongest fellow in these parts, besides being the most skilful wrestler, the best swordsman, and the most dangerous hand at quarter-staff in all Warwickshire. I saw him fight long George Elliot, the North-country champion, on Kenilworth Green. Lord help us! Elliot was a giant to look on, but Walter Arderne beat him to a mummy, in six bouts. He'll soon make the gentry cove's bones rattle in his skin like a dice-box at a country fair; it'll be confess, and be hanged, in the flourish of a cudgel. You war at 'size, landlord:—tell us how the prisoner looked?"

"Looked," said the host; "why he looked like a king more than a culprit. He walked into court as if he war going to try Judge, instead of having to be judged. He refused to make any further defence than that he was in-

nocent of every thing charged against him; gave the lie to the whole pack of us, (me amongst the rest) and demanded the trial by battle."

"So," said the Coventry man, "that's to be the upshot is it; and when do it come off?"

"On Wednesday next, didn't I tell you," returned the other, "they're to fight it out on the Green at Hill Moreton? There's a gibbet erected before the old manor house where this man's father resided, before he went abroad, and where he himself was born. A pleasant sight it 'll be for old Windblow, the miller, to look upon every morning from his parlour-window. What a strange thing that the old chap should have found the use of his legs, and got about in the way he has done; ain't it, landlord?"

"Ay, but there's stranger work than any thing you have spoken to-night," said the third stranger, who had sat listening with his head leaning upon the ample chimney-piece, without hitherto joining in the conversation. "There's stranger work, they say, up yonder at the Hall. They say that Mistress Dorothea Hubald is mad, and obliged to be close confined. Nay, there be some as say she's dead; at any rate, there's Squire d'Arbercourt, her father, and her brother come all the way from Cheshire to be

with her. They were obliged to clap a straight waistcoat upon her, I heard, a week ago. There's no servants like to stay there either, they do say, from the awful noises and shrieks heard all night long; they've had three new sets within the last three weeks since this business happened. It's a known fact that both old Hubald and his son walks. Nay, I know a man who could tell you more if he liked; for I believe he was discharged from the Hall for opening his mouth too wide on the subject. And there he sits."

"Nay, it's no such secret either," struck in the ostler; "for I know two or three folks as have seen young Stephen with their own eyes after dark, gliding about the avenue. For my part, I wouldn't go down it after sun-down, if you'd give me the estate for the walk. It's a fearful place that Murdake, according to all accounts; the avenue haunted, one says; the garden is bewitched, says another; round it the forester is afeard to venture alone into the woods; and now you tell us the house itself is haunted."

"Marry!" said the host, "it seems to be the devil's head-quarters. But come, Robin Marvel, let's hear what you have seen and known, for this howling night seems to me just fitted



for a ghost story ; is it really fact that there are queer sights at the Hall, eh ?”

“It’s true enough what Thomas Snail tells you,” said Marvel, “about the noises inside the building. What’s to be seen outside, as he’s often there labouring at his calling, and letting fly a shot amongst the deer after dark, he, no doubt, best knows. With regard to Mistress Dorothea being out of her mind, that’s *not* true, though it’s true enough that her maid is mad ; and true it is also that she’s in confinement, where nobody but Mistress Dorothea Hubald is allowed to see or attend on her ; indeed, some of the people at the Hall think she’s dead.”

“Good heavens !” said the niece, drawing closer to the fire, “how extraordinary ; what was it drove her mad ?”

“Why the very noises you’ve just heard tell of. I mind well the sounds on that night of horrors — the night after old Hubald and his son had been buried. We were sitting up late, we men, and all the maids had gone off to bed. The room where the bodies had lain was the best bed-room, where the old man died ; it is in the south wing of the building, not far from the kitchen where we sat. Mistress and Margaret had slept together

ever since master's death; we were all talking over the murder of Master Stephen, and taking an extra glass or two, for we'd been royally treated with liquor ever since it happened, when we heard a dreadful scuffling in master's room. The sounds were exactly as if five or six giants were struggling together; their feet trod the ground as if they had worn shoes of cast iron instead of Spanish leather, and each sole a ton in weight. The noise was so extraordinary, that we all looked more like ghosts ourselves than mortal men; we couldn't speak, we were afraid to move, and it seemed agony to sit still. O Lord! O Lord! I'm afeard now as I recollect it, 'twas so awful! After these horrible sounds had lasted about five minutes, as well as I could remember, we heard a heavy fall, and a noise like something choking, and then there rung out a dreadful cry: "help, Doll! help!" we heard as plain as if it had been sounded on a trumpet in master's own voice, same as when he lived; it seemed to pass all through the house."

"Well," said the host, drawing nearer to the fire, "I wouldn't have been there for more than I'll say or you believe. I fear me, there's been some queer work in yon place; I should be mortal glad to hear of its being set

fire to, and burned to the ground. Well, what happened next ; did you see him?"

"No, we didn't see him, though we thought he was coming in double quick time ; for in about half a minute more we heard some one rushing and jumping down stairs, as if the devil was behind 'em ; and next moment into the kitchen burst Margaret Bustlebig, my lady's maid, with her hair all flying behind her like a comet, her eyes starting from the sockets, and not a stitch of any thing on her body but her shift. She dashed into the midst of us, upset the table, and fell almost a-top o' the fire in a fit. Walter Arderne, who had looked whiter than any of us, and as if he meant to have a fit too, suddenly seemed to recover himself, and caught her up in his arms. The next minute mistress herself, with a candle in her hand and her dressing-gown on, but with neither shoes or stockings on her feet, came into the kitchen also. She seemed more frightened about the maid than any thing else. And, after awhile, persuaded Walter to help her up stairs again ; I assisted also, and we laid her on mistress's bed, when after a time she came to. But, Lord help you ! she was as mad as a March hare, and has been so ever since."

"There's more in it than we know of," said

the host ; “ my word on’t, but there’s been some ugly work up yonder. Body o’ me ! but I don’t believe Sir Clinton Murdake is a bit deeper in the mess than some others I wot of.”

“ Then why did you go up before Major Illwill, and give evidence against him, uncle, in such a mortal hurry ?” said his niece.

“ What the devil would you have me do, ye graceless baggage ye ?” returned the landlord. “ Wasn’t Walter Arderne here, fiery red with haste, knocking me up in the middle of the night, with tidings that Master Stephen Hubald had been found murdered in the avenue, and that the old man was dead at the Hall ? And war’nt he here again by break o’ day, accusing Sir Clinton Murdake of Master Stephen’s murder, as clear as if he had seen him do the deed with his own eyes ? Wasn’t Stephen Hubald here courting yourself every night of his life, and only wanting you to fling yourself at him, ye stupid jade ? Hadn’t he more broad pieces in his purse than I could count ’twixt sunrise and sunset ; and didn’t this cavaliero, with his embroidered buff coat, his belts, his scarfs, and his bannerets, and horse trappings, and spit of a rapier—didn’t he go from this very kitchen, and cut the young man’s throat, and all my fine prospects ? It was enough to provoke a man

to say what he thought about the matter; and no great matter either, when almost all I could say was, that I knew little or nothing."

"Nay," said the niece, "but then that little that you didn't know, added to the something the rest of you have put together and made evidence of, helped to get this poor gentleman into a pretty mess, and will hang him notwithstanding. As for me, I don't believe he's had more to do with the matter than you, or Walter Arderne, or any of us here."

"Go to, you're a fool," returned the host. "Because this gallant has an aquiline nose, a hawk's eye, as much hair upon his head and shoulders as would stuff half the cushions in my bar, and a step like a lion, you think he's innocent of any thing wicked. It's like all you trumpery female women, that."

"Ay," said the niece, "and because he's a nobleman, and as handsome looking, and nice behaved a gentleman, as ever I hoped to look upon, you are all so mortal angry and fearful he shouldn't be guilty of some horrid crime. Envy, uncle, sheer envy; you men are twice as envious of the good gifts of your sex as ours, for all your railing at us."

"Well, well," said the host, "let it be so. We'll drop this, niece, if you please; I tell you

I'm sorry now I said aught about him; it's on my conscience since I saw him on his trial, he bore himself so meekly, and yet so bravely. Yet, they're nothing to me, these Murdakes; they're almost forgotten in these parts now. It's hard too, I will say, to return to one's native land, as this youngster has done, and stand accused of such a fearful crime, if he really is innocent. Dang me if I don't think he was holding his peace to save others from death, after all. Well, Robin, let's know what more you have to tell us; did you hear or see any more?"

"Not on that night," said Robin Marvel; "but the next night somewhere about the same hour, the very same thing happened again. There was the struggling, and scuffling, and the cry for help from master's room, just as before; and no sooner did it begin, than the maid Margaret set up such a shrieking and screaming from the room where mistress had confined her, and where indeed, she was shut up with her at the time, that it was all we could do to keep from rushing out of the house and taking to the open fields."

"'Twere no wonder if you had," said the host; "for my part I'm almost afraid as I listen, but come, the flaggon's empty, we'll e'en brew us ano-

ther cup for the nonce, whilst we listen to the finish of your story. Here, Dorcas, heap on more logs, girl, this heavy rain will drown the very fire upon the hearth; and Marian, do you fetch us t'other bottle, and warm us a comfortable nightcap, put in plenty of cloves and cinnamon. Now, Robin, here's to you in a cup of as good liquor as you'll find twixt this and Warwick. Let us have the finish of your story."

"The rest, perhaps, you partly know," said Marvel; "for, on the day after, several of the servants left the Hall, and more company arrived there that evening than were altogether welcome; Squire Hubald's kinsman came from London, and laid claim to right of possession."

"Ay," said the landlord, "they baited their horses here on that day, as they went up, and inquired the road; as ill-favoured and scurvy looking a set of companions as ever I beheld. There was the nephew of Master Hubald, who it seems claims to be his heir; he looked, methought, more like a deputy mop squeezer to an undertaker, than the owner of such a place as Murdake. They say however he's rich, and a slop-seller from Wapping; for the rest, they were a marvellously down-

looking company as ever my eyes rested upon, and I've seen some ugly customers occasionally too, at the Checquers."

"No doubt," said Robin, glancing at the man seated next the chimney-piece, who indeed was the most incorrigible poacher in the county; "no doubt you have. However, these worthies stopped at the Hall, almost at the same time Squire d'Arbercourt and his two sons and their servants arrived from Cheshire, for mistress had'nt been in any hurry to inform her friends of Squire Hubald's death. I promise you, Squire d'Arbercourt is as likely a looking man as you would wish to look upon, and his sons are two well-favoured youths. The old gentleman has a portly figure, with a jolly red round face, and a peaked beard; he stands full six feet two, if he's an inch, in height; he wore a loose hunting frock with a bugle by his side, and looked as though he knew what a hound or falcon was, as well as the best man in Warwickshire. Nay, for the matter of that, he had as handsome a hawk as ever I have seen upon his left hand, with silver bells and a crimson hood upon its head; I'll warrant him a sportsman tried, that man. We'll drink his health, landlord. I only wish he may gain the day, and settle at Murdake,



for we want a man of spirit there to keep the place alive."

"Here's to him," said the poacher; "though we don't want any more of your sporting squires in these parts; to my thinking, we've enough, and to spare already."

"What, you think, perhaps, he might keep a sharper falconer, than Walter Arderne? Well, you've had the woods at Murdake all to yourselves, you must allow of late, old chap."

"No blame to us either!" returned the other. "If Squire Hubald had no care for his hares and rabbits, and you fellows up at the Hall were too fond of your beds to turn out after dark, into the plantings, I know a company of jolly dogs who are nothing loth to look after them for you, and who like better to be brushing the dew off the fern by moonlight than to be snoring on the softest pillow in the country."

"Ay, ay!" said Robin, "Walter's a cunning chap; I know all about it. Well, as I was saying, the Squire and the others almost met at the head of the avenue, and rode up to the Hall, just like a couple of parties during the war time; for the Squire I believe was pretty busy among Rupert's headlong horsemen at Marston Moor, and the other lot were,

as you say, a mighty crop-eared looking company. Mistress came down and welcomed Squire d'Arbercourt and her brothers; and the other party, meanwhile, having walked into the house, quickly made themselves known by taking formal possession. Mistress was somewhat astonished, as you may suppose, and Squire d'Arbercourt was a little posed too; high words ensued, and he resolved that possession they should'nt have, so the house for the rest of the evening was in a state of siege. The Squire would have ejected them neck and crop, but mistress would'nt have it; so the Hubalds had one wing, and the d'Arbercourts the other. Mistress tried to speak 'em fair, and bid 'em welcome as guests, but this did not suit them, they said they had law on their side and right of possession; and, as Squire d'Arbercourt was evidently a better man at the tail of the pack, than when following up the quicks and quillits of the lawyer, whom they had brought down along with 'em from Wapping, I began to see we should'nt be long before cold iron would be called into play to settle the matter. The Hubalds had possession of the north wing of the building, and the Squire had the south wing, and there we were safe enough; for having the buttery and the kitchen on our side the house, we had

the best of 'em, and did'nt lack good cheer and plenty of liquor to keep us merry. They made one or two attempts to get at the pantry and the cellars; but we were too many for them, and held our own, and they were forced to let one of their party out of a window, and send into the village here, for wherewithal to keep 'em."

"Ay," said the landlord, "the fellow rode down here, and bought meat, bread, candles, and liquor; I saw him in the village."

"Well," resumed Robin, "we held our own as I said, for, of course, all us servants that remained in the Hall were on mistress's side, and the Squire got out plenty of liquor, placed his sentinels, and resolved to sit up all night in the great Hall, and make a 'rouse on't. Just about midnight, down came the crop-ears in a body, and in a twinkling a couple of dozen bright blades leapt from their scabbards, and the two parties, ranged on either side the Hall, were at it like lightning. The fray would doubtless have sent a few of us to our account; but almost before the weapons had clashed, and a dozen cuts and passes had been given and received, that cursed and awful noise commenced again in the master's room. Although the uproar of the combatants was

pretty great, for in the Hall some thirty men were lunging, thrusting, and parrying, that noise stopt the fray in an instant, and the whole party stood like statues listening to the sound. There were the heavy footfalls, like a plank beating the floor, the scuffling, scrambling, and the awful voice screaming all through the building. That horrible sound I shall never forget it if I live to a hundred. Walter Arderne, who I always thought had the stoutest heart of any man in Warwickshire, and feared neither man nor devil, swooned outright ; the maids ran terrified into the Hall, and Mistress herself rushed down stairs as white as a sheet. Meanwhile, Squire d'Arbercourt and his sons recovered themselves, and calling upon us to follow them with lights, hastened up stairs in order to see the meaning of the noise. We searched all through the rooms above, but found nothing to explain the meaning of the uproar. The Squire and Mistress Dorothea were afterwards closeted for some hours, and the Hubalds were no longer opposed in taking possession. Some of us servants were discharged for saying we suspected there had been something wrong in the matter of the old man's death ; and that's all I know of the affair. Since then, I believe, the Squire and his daughter and all their

party have left for London or Cheshire, and the place has been quieter ; but I promise you I would'nt spend another night there for a year's wages in advance."

"It's a bad business altogether, Robin, I fear," said mine host, "and as you say, there's been foul play somewhere. Heaven's above us, and sooner or later we shall have the truth on't. I suppose you are all for the lists at Hill Moreton the day after to-morrow to see the combat. Well, it's an awful trial, and a disgraceful end for a man of quality ; but, however, he's not the first man nor yet will be the last either, who has been hanged through a woman's intrigues ; I say nothing, because I don't want to get into a mess ; but if the women up yonder hav'nt had as much to do in that business as the poor gentleman, that's about to suffer, my name's not Civilbonnet."

## CHAPTER X.

## THE TRIAL BY DUEL.

Go, take hence that traitor from our sight,  
For by his death, we do perceive his guilt.

SHAKSPERE.

THE lists which had been erected for the trial by duel, were, as was mentioned by the discarded serving-man of the Hall, situate just beside the ruins of the old Manor House at Hill Moreton, and a gibbet also graced the spot.

The judges of the combat, the constabulary, and a strong body of men-at-arms from the towns of Coventry and Warwick, together with an immense concourse of spectators, drawn to the spot eager to witness the encounter, were early in attendance on the day appointed.

The spectators were for the most part of the lower order; for the circumstance of a man of quality meeting with even handed justice,

and being thus condemned for the crime imputed to him, was extremely satisfactory to the many-headed monster, and they hied to the scene with feelings of anticipated gratification.

Sir Clinton Murdake and the opponent on whom he had rebutted the foul charge of the murder of Stephen Hubald, and had defied to mortal encounter, stood confronting each other as the clock in the tower of Hill Moreton church struck the hour of noon. They were both of them clad in leathern doublets, their arms and legs being without defence of any sort, and bare, their hair close cropped, and each was armed with a heavy oaken staff bound at either end with iron.

The young cuirassier, who in figure, face, and mien might have formed a study for the sculptor, stood on the green turf of the arena, with his ponderous weapon upon his shoulder, apparently unconcerned at the awful and deadly trial that awaited him ; doubtless he felt the shame of the situation he was placed in, but the breastplate of an untainted heart gave him a threefold protection. He felt the truth of the great poet's words even in that awful moment ; for his quarrel being just, his

look and bearing gave to the spectators the idea of one to whom fear was a feeling utterly unknown. After gazing around upon the assembled throng with a look of the most haughty and unqualified contempt, as some of the more ruffianly of the throng groaned, hooted, and called to him revilingly by name, he fixed his eye upon his antagonist with a steady gaze, and quietly waited the signal to commence hostilities.

Walter Arderne his opponent, a man of tremendous strength of limb and vast muscular power, stood a few paces from him. His great personal bravery; the skill he was known to possess in all rural games and exercises; and his dexterity in the very weapon he was now armed with; added to the supposed justice of his cause, constituted him the favourite, with the majority of the rude and easily prejudiced crowd. To many of the audience he was personally known, to almost all by reputation; for like Charles, the Duke's wrestler, he had seldom failed to break the bones of those strong fellows who at the fairs and wakes of the time, had entered into a trial of skill and strength with him.

Notwithstanding, however, the encouraging



cheer with which his entrance into the lists had been greeted by the assemblage around, his bearing was different, and was scarcely so confident as that of his opponent.

His great muscular strength and towering height, for he was considerably above six feet, gave him, it is true, the look of a Roman gladiator; but there was a lowering and crouching look also about him, and a restlessness and apparent nervousness, totally at variance with the cool and collected bearing of Sir Clinton Murdake. His brow was bent, his eyes sought the turf at his feet, he frequently shifted his position, scarcely seemed to bear the gaze of his adversary, but ever and anon darted a savage look at him, and like the tiger overawed by the eye of his keeper, he watched the withdrawal of his glance, that he might spring upon and tear him limb from limb.

Two distinguishing marks might have also been noted, as the combatants stood thus for a moment opposite to each other, equally characteristic of the men who bore them.

On the bare throat and sinewy arms of the soldier who had led on many a successful onslaught, and had more than once been left

amongst the slain in the stricken field, might be seen the scars of more than one gun shot, and several sabre wounds. The limbs of his more bulky opponent also bore ample testimony to the actions and deeds he had been most noted for the performance of, exhibiting the disgraceful mark of the branding-iron on his hand and arm for sheep-stealing in his early youth.

The barriers at either end of the lists having been closed, and the encroaching mob forced back by the mounted men-at-arms; all preliminaries also settled, and the crier having pronounced that no man should presume to attempt interruption or interference with the combatants, who were to work their worst and best upon each other's carcasses, "God defending the right;" the business of the day commenced. The word being given, the opponents stood at guard with their ponderous staves in an instant, whilst the hubbub and noise of the assemblage sank into the silence of the dead, saving and excepting the sounds of the rapid strokes of Master Windblow's mill-wheel close at hand, and the rush of the waters which turned it.

The falconer grasping his weapon with both hands, like a two-hand sword, at once dashed

upon his adversary, dealing him blows as swift as the strokes of the mill-wheel in the stream, as if intending at once to finish the combat by annihilating his antagonist.

Sir Clinton, who possessed immense strength of arm, and was skilled both in the rapier and broad-sword, held his weapon in one hand, leaving a small portion visible beneath his fist. He received the attack with the utmost coolness and caution, retreating as he parried and avoided the furious onset ; ever and anon he severely checked the ferocity of the assault by a lunge so well given, as to hit his adversary more than once full in the face, and make him stop and shake his ears with rage and pain.

The falconer, indeed, became almost maddened, after having received two or three of these "counterchecks quarrelsome ;" he had fought too wide to successfully parry these blows, and he now struck still more at random, but with such desperate fury, that Sir Clinton once or twice had his ponderous staff nearly beaten down upon his own head. Quite aware that the slightest mistake on his part, would be taken advantage of, and that his ferocious opponent would tear him to pieces like a bull dog if he could once strike him down, he kept

well away and bided his time. Had it been an encounter with the sword, he could have brought it to a close at any moment; but here he had an adversary before him like an infuriated bull who was well skilled in the weapon he fought with, and whose immense strength made it still dangerous for the Knight to assume the offensive towards his opponent. His object, therefore, was to retire and keep him at bay, whilst the evident wish of the falconer was, since he could neither hit his adversary or pen him in a corner, to rush within his weapon and get him fairly in his gripe.

Meanwhile the mob getting excited, and on their mettle as the exhibition proceeded, began to cheer the falconer on, advised him where to deliver his weapon, and vociferated their applause whenever he dealt a sufficiently swashing blow, getting their own pates occasionally well rapped by the staves of the constabulary for their pains. So that two or three minor fights were going on at the same time without the barrier.

At length the falconer became cooler and more weary in his efforts. He had received more than one tremendous punisher from the iron-bound weapon of his opponent, when

venturing too near in order to close. He was also getting somewhat thick-breathed from being so long the assailant. Sir Clinton accordingly seized the moment, and now stood well up to his adversary, who began to look a little cowed as the other assumed the offensive. The staves rattled furiously, and the falconer began to give ground in his turn; suddenly he seemed determined upon one grand effort, and by leaping upon the Knight, hoped either to cut him down, or seize upon him and hurl him to the earth. In this attempt he received a dreadful blow, which striking him full across his countenance, effectually stopped his further efforts. His motions after this salute were frightful to look on: he reeled and nearly fell, with both hands sawing the air above his head; then dropping his quarter-staff, he ran zig-zag towards the barrier at one end of the lists, and after staggering for a short time, fell on his face heavily beside the man-at-arms stationed there.

Sir Clinton might have followed up the advantage on his opponent before he reached the barrier, but he was too noble to avail himself of this. He dropped the end of his staff upon

the turf, and waited to see if the falconer should recover the effects of his blow sufficiently to renew the combat. When he saw him fall, he stepped up, and turning him upon his back, looked him in the face. A single glance sufficed to shew him that he had no longer any very formidable foe to encounter. The iron end of his staff had struck him with terrific effect across the mouth, dashing in all his teeth, and fracturing his jaw. He had also apparently received some injury on the brain, as he lay for some time without sense or motion.

The spectators, without the barrier, accordingly concluding their old champion was killed outright, began to give utterance to their disappointment in sundry deep-mouthed groans and yells against the victor; whilst those in attendance within the ring crowded about the prostrate body, and the hangman and his assistant claiming it as their own, endeavoured to raise and reanimate it.

After dashing water on the bleeding countenance of the vanquished, he began slowly to recover his senses, and staring wildly about him as consciousness returned, he attempted to regain his feet as soon as he saw his adversary

standing over him. The Knight, however, signing to the attendants to fall back, clapped his foot upon his breast, and heaving up his staff, forbade the motion.

“Make not the attempt,” said he sternly, “or I will save the hangman’s labour, and beat out your brains. From this spot you move not alive until you have unsaid the foul lie you have given utterance to, and cleared me from the stain of murder. That done, for me you are free as air.”

“Take your foot from my breast,” said the falconer with difficulty; “for God’s sake, let me raise my head. O heaven! I am dying!”

“Confess your villany, then,” returned the Knight, “clear your conscience, and make your peace with heaven.”

“I confess all, every thing,” mumbled the dying man. “Raise my head, for the love of heaven, or I shall be suffocated.”

The Knight withdrew his foot from the prostrate falconer, and he was assisted into a sitting posture by the surrounding attendants, his swollen and bleeding face was then washed, and restoratives were administered, after which he confessed as well as he was able, that by his hand Stephen Hubald had fallen. Moreover (to the surprise of the Knight and his

auditors, he declared that he had assisted in the murder of old Hubald also some short time afterwards.

“He had been instigated,” he said, “to undertake one deed, and assist in the other, by his mistress, Dorothea Hubald, who, after some difficulty, had purchased his services for a considerable sum ; and after he had waylaid and shot the son at the head of the avenue of Murdake Hall, he had aided his mistress and her maid to dispose of the old man. They had been admitted by Dorothea, as agreed on, while her husband slept soundly after the fatigue of his journey ; and the two females having twisted a towel round his neck, he had thrown himself upon his master’s body and held him down. whilst they pulled from either side the bed and strangled him. The old gentleman,” he added, “had made a desperate effort to release himself, and having got his hands between his throat and the towel, gave them considerable trouble before they could dispatch him. Whilst so little did he suspect his wife of any participation in the act, that he shouted to her by name for assistance—‘ Help, Doll ! help !’ After the deed was fairly accomplished, he had stolen out, by his mistress’s directions, to reconnoitre the grounds ; and suddenly en-



countering Sir Clinton Murdake there, had taken him at first for the apparition of his murdered master, and was nearly captured by the Knight; but, on the outcry of Dorothea for assistance, had made his escape."

## CHAPTER XI.

Last scene of all  
That ends this strange eventful history.

SHAKSPERE.

AT once, then, behold the hero of our story exonerated by the confession, of his adversary, from all participation in the dark deeds which thus unscrupulously perpetrated, had "left no rubs nor botches in the work."

Sir Clinton Murdake felt a bitter pang when he thus heard of the reckless atrocity and wickedness of the beautiful Dorothea. Notwithstanding his knowledge of her disposition, and his almost confirmed suspicions of her guilt, the narration could not fail to strike him with grief and horror. He was lost in a reverie, whilst his sometime foe, with all his sins upon his head, was being hurried to the foot of the

gallows where in a few moments the mutilated victim was seen dangling in the air.

The inconstant and wavering mob had mostly hurried after their former favourite, whom they now loaded with as many execrations as they had, before he was vanquished, received with encouraging cheers.

Sir Clinton was aroused from his reverie by some one touching his shoulder, and looking round, found Master Windblow beside him.

“God be praised for all his goodness,” said the miller. “I knew well enough, Sir Clinton, how things would go. I told you at Warwick, your knave would be confounded in his villany. But, you do not well, Sir, to remain here. Yon ruffian had many friends amongst those shouting rascallions. Withdraw yourself into my house ; your horse stands ready saddled in the paddock hard by. I have kept him for you during your confinement. Remove yourself to Stratford-upon-Avon, I will join you there this evening. Here is your purse too, as you gave it me. Farewell for the present.”

“Thanks, good Windblow,” said the Knight, “perhaps ’twere best so; be with me betimes at Stratford, since now I quit this neighbourhood and this land for ever.”

The friends shook hands and separated; and Sir Clinton following the miller's advice, retired from the lists, and after equipping himself in the miller's apartment, sprung upon his horse and pursued his way towards Stratford-upon-Avon.

Now that his own peril was over, the dreadful fate, which awaited Dorothea, weighed heavily upon his soul. Such was the effect produced on his mind by the beauty and fascinations of that unhappy and headstrong woman, that he still felt some compunctious visitings, when he reflected that, for his sake, she had dared and executed such fearful deeds.

Whilst these thoughts possessed him, the woods of Murdake came in view; ominous looking and dreary at this time of the year, the trees were without foliage, and the country around half under water, with the recent floods which had been prevalent that winter.

The waters being out, the road was impassable to the town of Wickford, and unconsciously Sir Clinton found himself once more traversing the park. Suddenly he resolved to ride to the Hall, and, by being beforehand with the officers of justice, he would be thus enabled to inform Dorothea of the confession of the

falconer, and give her a chance of effecting her escape.

The mansion, as he neared it, appeared deserted. The windows were mostly closed, and nobody was to be seen in its vicinity.

Jumping from his horse, he tried to gain admittance by the main entrance; all was fast, and the reverberation of his knocks for admittance, was all he could hear.

At length he remembered the key of the little postern which admitted him, on the night of the murder, into Dorothea's chamber. This he found in the pocket of his doublet. He traversed around to the rear of the building, opened the door, and ascending the stone steps, which were cut in the thickness of the wall, pushed aside the panel and admitted himself into the chamber.

It was so dark that he had to feel his way across the room, in order to find the window, to gain light, so that he might make his way to other parts of the house. Whilst doing so, he was nearly overpowered by a suffocating odour, which filled the apartment. It seemed to him as if he had invaded a charnel-house.

On opening the window he observed that the dark curtains of the hearse-like bed were

nearly closed. He approached, and withdrawing them, started back with horror and disgust.

On the bed, where last he had beheld the murdered body of Old Hubald, he now saw the once lovely Dorothea. She was dead. From the state of decomposition of her body, it was evident that life had for some time departed from it.

The story is ended. No certain intelligence was ever afterwards obtained of Sir Clinton Murdake. An English gentleman, however, some years afterwards rose high in the service of a foreign power. He became the leader of armies, and the friend of a crowned head; and though he had achieved high-sounding titles, he was supposed to be this very man.

It is only necessary to add, that Margaret the maid, having escaped the custody of Dorothea, was apprehended in London, and was burned at the stake, near the Hermitage on Wolvey Heath, towards the side of Shiretown Lordship, where the country people, to this day, shew the place.

How Dorothea died, no one ever knew: she had quarrelled with her father and family in consequence of his entertaining suspicion of her

participation in her husband's murder, and had expelled him from Murdake.

The Hall itself, and the whole estate was for years the subject of repeated law-suits. It changed owners half-a-dozen times, and none ever prospered who attempted to reside within its walls.

**THE END.**

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